

FLORENCE WILKINSON
THE FAR COUNTRY



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THE FAR COUNTRY

The Far Country

BY

FLORENCE WILKINSON

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Author of
Kings and Queens



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DEDICATORY

MY FRIENDS AND BELOVEDS, I GIVE THIS BOOK TO YOU,
YOU THAT HAVE WARMED ME, WELCOMED ME, KEPT ME TRUE;
SWEETLY BELIEVED IN ME ALWAYS, NOBLY PRAISED ME,
SEEN WHAT WAS BEST IN ME, BY YOUR LOVE UPAISED ME.
YOU THAT HAVE CIRCLED ME WITH YOUR SHINING FACES,—
CLOUDS OF GLORY ABOVE MY DIFFICULT PLACES,—
(GOD, THAT GAVE YOU TO ME, I THANK HIM FOR HIS GRACES!)
YOU MY COMPANIONS, IN THAT FAR COUNTRY OUR GOAL,
THIS IS YOUR BOOK, BELOVEDS, MY HEART AND MY BRAIN AND
MY SOUL.

THE WORLD, PERHAPS, WILL FORGET OR PASS IT BY,
DUST OF THEIR FEET, THEIR BREATH, THEIR GLANCING EYE,
YET FROM SUCH CLAY I TOOK TO BUILD THEREBY.
YOU, ABOVE ALL, DEAR HEART, WHO READ AND KNOW,
ACCEPT A GIFT THE GREATEST I CAN BESTOW.
CRITICS MAY SMILE AND TOSS THE BOOK ON THE SHELF,
BUT YOU, DEAR HEART, SHALL SAY: "SO THIS IS FLORENCE
HERSELF."

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PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE



WIND-FOOTED LOVELINESS

THERE'S a little land of waterfalls I love, I love.

(Oh, you girl with the wind in your hair!)

Fantastic Fédoz a torrent of snow

And Piz Corvatch high up in the air,

Like the bubble a god might blow;

And Orlegna that we looked for all the tossing after-
noon

Till the mists drifted wide and the glacier died,

A pink flame soaring up to the moon.

(Oh, you girl with the foam in your hair!)

There was Monte Muretto a dazzling stiletto,

And Fex shivering on her white stair,

Dripping-foot, wind-blown and aflare,

Till the blue hills rushed together in the vast prime-
val weather

Like the prows of fabled ships when the dying sun
dips

To the night, underneath Lunghino's feather.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

There's a little land of waterfalls I love, I love.

One waterfall only a voice,

Flung up to the peaks, a voice.

(Oh, you girl with the clouds in your hair,

A darling, a splendour, a dare!)

How the ecstatic memory stings

Of Caroggia's misty wings

And the chasm magnificent where that whirling white-
ness went,

Courier to the breathless lips of kings.

(Oh, you girl with the sunset in your hair,

How I wanted you, wanted you there!)

By the brook of Surlej just a lapful of spray

And a curveting gleam in the air:

And Orlegna that we looked for all Apollo's after-
noon

Till the hunter-twilight came and the glacier broke
to flame,

Fading up to the crescent of the moon.

There's a little land of waterfalls I love, I love.

(Oh, you girl with the stars in your hair,

How I kissed you and revelled in you there!)

Heroic, afraid, how I held you undismayed

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

While the reapers carolled homeward from Campfer.
And Orlegna that we looked for all the wreathèd
afternoon
Floated off upon the dark while you whispered,
“ Hark, Hark
To the drunken music of the reapers by the
moon! ”

There's a little land of waterfalls I love, I love;
Swift white Mera runs below, white Bondasca lifts
above.

*(Oh, you girl with the kisses in your hair,
How I loved you and loved you there!)*

I am calling you still from your fountain-singing hill,
A darling, splendour, a dare.

There are grey leagues and abysses between me and
your kisses

And Orlegna that we looked for all that vanished
afternoon

Till the zodiac darkness came and the glacier's globe
of flame

Was a sister to the circlet of the moon.

*(Oh, you girl with the glory in your hair,
Do you listen, remember and care?)*

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

It is I, the empyreal angel of your youth,
Smitten now and bruised by unimaginable ruth,
With a helmeted sky-coloured Vision riding down
despair;

When I lay me prone in the mould, weary and beaten
and old,

Will you come and whisper to me softly there,
In the autumn-leaf of golden Castasegna,
When it haunts me,—the aërial wistfulness of Or-
legna,—

You, imperishable fragment, torment, lure and quest,
Whisper to me in the darkness with your lips on my
poor breast,—

*Did you find that falling water under some
Pierian moon?*

*Was the look of her sweet as the sound of her was
That miraculous afternoon?*

MELANIE À MELANÇON

O, Melanie à Melançon,
You used to love the free hillside
Where purple-skirted shadows glide;
The billowing of the green marsh-grass
When winds a-vagabonding pass.

You used to love the tinging, cool
Plash of the heron in the pool
Of the wide roslands by Bel'Ile,
Taking his lonely evening meal.

O, Melanie à Melançon,
How well, how well you used to know
Fleet things that fly, sweet things that blow.

The roving warbler joyed to fare
With you along the river-stair,

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

The rippling, rushing amber stream
In cedar gloom, afoam, agleam;

The tented trees in nightly camp,
The firefly's wandering faery lamp,
The long moan of the houseless tide,
The golden eagle's cliff-born pride,

The saintly hours of the night
With star-girt brow, that walk in white,
All these you cherished when I knew
Springtide, the northland, love, and you.

O, Melanie à Melançon,
Where the blue juniper stands tall,
Your house is very dark and small.

The loyal children of the field
Linger about your quiet bield,
Brave yarrow and remembering rue
And meadow-sweet, for love of you.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

When April's tremulous twilights fill
The piping swamps, your mouth is still.
The troops of sunrise, bannered red,
Unminded march above your head.

Your folded glance will never swerve
To watch the sea-gull's splendid curve.
Nor heed you any more at all
The hill-bird's cry, the yorlin's call.

O, Melanie à Melançon,
Have you found life so passing sweet
Within that chamber's dumb retreat?
Or, should God point you to the key
Would you return to spring and me,
 Melanie à Melançon?

LETTICE

IN the vale of the Cornwallis
 Lettice lies asleep.
And the tides forever moving
 All about her creep.
And the five sea-rivers flowing
Day and night, keep coming, going,
But they rouse not little Lettice
 From her sleep.

Through the marshes of Cornwallis,
 Through the rusty red,
Slips the sea his shining fingers
 All about her bed.
And the zigzag birds are stringing
Up above the bleak Cornwallis,
And the sad brown grasses singing
 Round her head.

Little Lettice was my sister,
 And we used to play

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

On the hills and by the beaches,
 In the salt sea-spray.
Lettice loved the squirrel's chirring
And the crumpled leaves a-stirring
In the vale of the Cornwallis
 All the day.

Bushy-Tail is now beside her,
 Hands upon his breast
As I crossed them when he followed
 Lettice to her rest.
Soon the young corn will be shooting
In the vale of the Cornwallis,
And the white-throats will be fluting
 By their nest.

Soon sea-lavender will purple
 Avon's reedy shore.
And the grey marsh-rosemary
 Fill the dikes once more.
Lettice, Lettice, will you listen
When the buds begin to glisten
In the vale of the Cornwallis
 By your door?

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

Lettice, like the flowers, is sleeping
 Underneath the snow.
But I think that she will waken
 When the twin-flowers blow,
And that we shall roam together
Through the vale of the Cornwallis
As we used in sweet blue weather
 Long ago.

DANCING GAVR'INAY

(Druid)

I LIE in the shadow, I melt with the foam;
Menhir and cromlech
At lone Plouharnec,
In those vast ruined porches
I lift my pale torches,
But the wind and the wave are my house and my home.

I am the fairy Gavr'inay
Of the isles that march on the sea.
The glistening ghouls
Of the green sea-pools
They laugh and scatter for me.
I sleep in the caves
Or I run with the waves
From Loctudy to L'lle Tudy.

I lie in the shadow, I melt with the foam;
My words are sea-birds that call as they scurry;
My feet are light billows that dance in their hurry.
Armél, get thee hence in haste to thy home!

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

I am the fairy Gavr'inay.
Are you sick for sight of the broom?
Dip your hands in my hair
Streaming bright on the air;
It is gold of the prickly bloom.
Late, late it grows
And the black wind blows
Where the Rocks of the Dead Men boom.

There is never a secret your heart has known
But my smiling lips can tell.
In the bosom of night
I am dear delight—
O list to the mariner's knell!
The petrels skim
And the land shows dim
From Plouharnec to Ploërmel.

Armel, the little lips of thy child,
In his cradle at home are blowing thee kisses.
Say, hast thou forgotten thy wife's caresses,
Firelight and lamplight and homelier blisses
For Gavr'inay, Gavr'inay, thing of the wild?

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

I am the fairy Gavr'inay;
I dance on the darkening sea.
 When the loud rocks roar
 On the whitening shore
I will swing my lamps for thee.
 And the savage fell
 By Ploërmel
Shall ring with the voice of me.

*The Rocks of the Dead are smothered in fleece,
Mother Ankou is shearing her sheep.
 A wreck, a wreck,
 By Plouharnec!
Let the bell toll long and deep.
 Yet ah, nay, nay,
 'Tis Gavr'inay
Has cradled his soul to sleep.*

I lie in the shadow, I melt with the foam;
 Menhir and cromlech
 At lone Plouharnec,—
In those vast ruined porches
I lift my pale torches,
But the wind and the wave are my house and my home.

JANNIK AND GENEVIEVE
(Breton)

SUN drips down in a well of gold;
Flying geese like a line enscrolled,
Wild black writing across the gold.

Mother, will he not come to-night,
Jannik, Jannik?
(The sun-burnt sound of his biniou;
Oh, the dim sweet hour when he came to woo!)
He swung the scythe through the wet luzerne
And he sang to his swathe at the shining turn;
(Oh, the words of the song that he made me
learn!)
It is long since he came;
I will call his name:
Jannik, Jannik!

Sunset rusting the Druid fell
And the little sea-pools by Tregastel:
Cromlechs grim on the Druid fell.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

Little daughter, listen to me,
Beloved one!—
(Matin and vesper and holy bell,
Let him fast and pray in his tower cell;)
He is now a priest that was Jannik,—
Cloak and cowl and the shaven cheek;
(I have sealed his lips that he dare not speak.)
A little regret,
And then to forget,
Beloved one!

Climbing the cliffs of Dead Men's Bay
Rock-hewn desolate Saint Hervé,
Finger of God over Dead Men's Bay.

Little daughter, we dance to-night
In Rustephan.
(Jannik the peasant never again
Will pipe to her, come to her, over the fen,)
Little daughter, they dance the gavotte,
Young Corentin and Bernadotte.
(She closes her eyes and answers not.)
Candles and wine
And the flame of the pine
In Rustephan.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

Over the length of the languid land
Twilight laid like a quiet hand;
Step of the tide to the tremulous land.

Mother, my little hands are cold,
The dark has come.
(Jannik alone in the belfry tower!
Mary, have pity! This was the hour.)
Fling me away that gown of green,
With its trailing length and its hateful sheen,
(Oh, the sarrasin fields where the children glean!)
Shut me the door
And speak no more.
The dark has come.

Gossamer night like a web of black;
Flash of foam on the west wind's track;
Star of Saint Hervé piercing the black.

Mother, I am too tired to-night,
Too tired to sleep.
(I am sick of the swish of the dancers' feet
And the maniac measure the pipes repeat.)
Sing me a song of the Washers white,

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

Women three in the house of night.

(They are washing for me in the grey moonlight.)

Sing me a song,

Long and long;

Sing me to sleep.

Deep and deep is the bosom of sleep;

Fields of the poppy where peasants reap,

Trill of the skylark thrilling her sleep.

Little daughter, my Genevieve!

She is asleep.

(The pitiful hair spread out like grain,

The wasted hand on the counterpane!)

Never and never a peasant can

Wed with the house of Rustephan.

(Oh, the heart of a maid and the heart of a man!)

I will kiss her brow

And leave her now.

She is asleep.

Folded hands of Genevieve;

Tides that understand and grieve

All night long for Genevieve.

Father-in-God, when the sea goes out
By Tregastel,
(Oh, the marble calm of the buried face,
The vanished voice and the empty place!)
When the sea goes out on the orange rocks
And I hear the tinkle of homeward flocks,
(What a cruel calm is the calm that mocks!)
I hear, I hear,
In the evening clear
By Tregastel—

Angelus pealing from Saint Hervé;
Souls of the drowned in Dead Men's Bay
Reaching white hands to Saint Hervé.

When the sea goes out to its mothering caves,
To Tal-Yvern,
(Oh, the voice of the priest that wept above her;
The voice of Jannik, her peasant lover!)
I hear the sound of his biniou
And they walk in the fields as they used to do,
(Oh, the dim sweet hour when he came to woo!)
And the green of the sea
Is memory to me
At Tal-Yvern.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

Leagues of silence large and grave,
Feathery moon that crinkles the wave;
Liquid green and the silence grave.

Father-in-God, when dark comes down
 On Rustephan,
(The sleepers mutter as past each door
My garments whisper along the floor)
Within the shadow of the stair
Her bier stands there, the torches flare,
(Her face between the outspread hair)
 My tears down fall
 Upon her pall
 In Rustephan.

Stroke of midnight from the tower;
Sigh of a soul awake that hour;
Sad small star in the belfry tower.

I kneel and ask her to forgive,
 Forgive my sin.
Father-in-God, my tears down fall;
(She smiles and answers not at all.)

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

That moonbeam on the floor by thee
Lies not so straight, so white, as she,
(So still and smiling up at me!)

Mary in Heaven,
Ah, seven times seven,
Forgive my sin!

Skylark springing above her head;
Wrinkled splash of a poppy red;
Quiver of summer above her head.

MONIQUE ROSE

WITH folded hands sits Monique Rose
Day-long, in trancèd eldering doze;
White hair against the parchment cheek
And thin lips shrunk in silence meek.

Not thus her look was years ago
When she was Rose à Jeune Comeau,
And he who loved her sailed the main
By Minas Rips and Pointe aux Chênes,
And she with him from Grand Manan
To the bleak rock of Miquelon.

But now the kitchen pane beside
She sees the grey-faced rain-storm stride,
Blotting the tortuous town, the bay,
Scattering the mowers from the hay,
And broad-hipped women with their rakes,
Nor heeds she how the poplar shakes.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

For all within is warm and still,
The house-fly burrs along the sill;
Our Lady smiles upon the shelf,
By pampas grass and plates of Delf,

Just as she left them years ago,
When she was Rose, he Jeune Comeau,
And with the west wind whistling free
The *Marie-Belle* stood out to sea.

The fir-trees drip their purple cones
Among the velvet graveyard stones;
She knows the tree that marks his grave;
Beyond, St. Mary's turquoise wave
Where hulking whalers lie at ease
And mackerel sails bulge to the breeze.

Her grandson's wife, black-eyed Jacquette,
Hums all the day a chansonnette;
With babe at breast or foot on loom
She fills with stir the homely room.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

Grandmère is simple, muttering low,
Deaf to the folk that come and go.
Her grandson's wife with careless hand
Pins the lace coif and ribbon band.

But the vague eyes of Monique Rose
Hide clearer thoughts than Jacquette knows,
Far journeyings to the out-seas dim
That stretch beyond the horizon's rim;

Fair memories of companioned years
Before her cheeks were crossed by tears,
And brighter than the drift-wood flame
That freaks the chimney's blackened frame.

After the wide, low sun has set
And all the land is violet,
She hears the rolling sea-gate pour,
The shingle booming on the shore;
And where the mounting darkness yearns
The Stella Maris melts and burns.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

But when the house is fast asleep
Does Monique Rose long vigil keep,
Watching across her window glass
The stars in pale procession pass.

Nor fear nor pain her eyesight blur,
When God's tall Angel stands by her,
Bursting the night with fringent glow
For Monique Rose à Jeune Comeau.

ROSE HÈRE

ON the 2nd of November, 1903, the French boat *Vesper* was wrecked on the coast of Brittany, at the point of Pern, near the Ile d'Ouessant. It was three o'clock of a stormy foggy morning. Fourteen of the shipwrecked crew were cut adrift in a small skiff and lost their bearings in the dense fog and fierce gale and were driven upon the treacherous rocks of that terrible coast. Towards six o'clock of the same morning, Rose Hère, an aged peasant woman, destitute to the verge of starvation, stood on a ragged point of cliff, gathering in the night's harvest of fish and seaweed. She heard below her in the tumult of the shrouded morning the cries of the abandoned and desperate men. Although not able to swim, she plunged into the sea, was picked up by the skiff, and by her knowledge of the coast was able to guide the terrified sailors into the safety of the harbour.

(From the report of the Syndic of Ouessant Fishermen, published in the Paris *Figaro*, December 21, 1903.)

THE hurl of the sea, the swirl of the fog,
The black black wind like the scourge of a flog;
The boom of the sea in the gloom of dawn
And the teeth of the foam where the tide drove on.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

The whip of the wind round the point of Pern,
That Rock of Wrecks where dead men learn
The voyage that has no return.

Rose Hère stood sullen by the sea
And the haul of the deep-sea nets
She plucked across her knee.

“Shroud o’ the mist, my sister,” said she,
“There’s ruin abroad on the steppes of the sea.
Shroud o’ the mist, keep me blind,” said she.

“I am haggard and brown with wrinkled lips;
What do I care for stranger ships
Or the face of a corpse that dances and dips
Like a swollen gourd on the sea’s finger-tips?
I am ancient and empty with wrinkled lips.
Shroud o’ the fog, my sister,” said she,
“There’s ruin abroad on the steppes of the sea.”

She plucked from the nets across her knee
The struggling harvest of the sea,
Small creatures writhing to be free.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

Throb of the gill and glassy eye,
Pale mouths that gasped in misery,
The fishes pleaded not to die.

“ Little fishes, my brothers,” said she,
“ Yea, this same end shall come to me,
Only I pay the churchyard fee.

“ And those rich folk who buy and eat
Your little bodies for their meat,
Themselves are food i’ the winding sheet.

“ Little fishes, my brothers,” said she,
“ ’Tis a weary end for the spoil of the sea.”

The boom of the waves in the thick of the dawn
And the teeth of the foam as the tide drove on.
“ O ravenous sea, my mother,” she said,
“ Do you hunger for live folk or for dead?
There’s a million of souls have gone to your maw;
I know each cave where you crouch and draw
The pitiful bodies recoiling in awe
From the soapy touch of your foam-cold claw.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

“Are you hungry this morning, O mother,” she said,
“And with lovers or wives would you fain be fed?
I am not loved and I am not wed.
I am hungry myself, O mother,” she said.

The Ile d'Ouessant gave a human cry.
It flew from far like a hectic star,
The voice of men who dread to die,
The voice of men on death's strait street,
Of quick souls in a winding-sheet.

Rose Hère leaned over from her rock;
The sea in her face like a snowy flock
Shook and screamed to menace and mock.
“They are down below where the sea-bulls fight,
Where the horns of the rock like beasts interlock;
'Tis I who know their piteous plight,
And the shoals of the sea are as glass to my sight.
I must leap below if I dare, if I dare,
I must save them, save them,” said Rose Hère.

(Through the smoke of the sea and the smother of
foam
She will pilot their boat to the harbour of home.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

They will ride the sea and the sullen crest
Into the peace of the roadstead of Brest.)

“ They are hungry for life, O mother,” she said,
“ As I am hungry for meat and bread.
’Tis a fierce, fierce pain to be hungry,” she said,
“ And a fiercer joy to be fed, to be fed.
I come,” she called, “ I have heard your cry.
You are young and eager. It’s hard to die.
You are full of blood as once was I.
You are humans. I love you. . . . You shall
not die.”

AT SLEEPING WATER

ALL day the showery poplar stands
By Sleeping Water.
The redwing calls from the wet *landes*,
Black willows dip their streaming hands
In Sleeping Water.

All day poor Landry by his door
From dawn's pink fog till evening hoar
Looks for the ship that comes no more
To Sleeping Water.

His neighbours smile and shake the head
For little Jeanne is long since dead,
Who with her madcap lover fled
From Sleeping Water.

All day the blue-yoked oxen strain
The dripping bronze kelp-laden wain,
Creaking along the seaward lane
By Sleeping Water.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

All day poor Landry's ancient gaze,
Holding the hope of other days,
Is fixed upon the long sea-haze
By Sleeping Water.

The russet hills, fringed low with spruce,
Slope into creeks of flower-de-luce,
Blue-bannered by the reedy sluice
Of Sleeping Water.

The grave Acadian women pass,
Black-caped, to christening and to mass,
Brushing the tufted cotton-grass
By Sleeping Water.

And Landry turns his patient ear
To list the sound he used to hear,
Jeanne, carolling like a wood-note clear
By Sleeping Water.

Wild vetch and roses pink and large
Clamber along the grey sea-marge
And peer into the placid targe
Of Sleeping Water.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

But nevermore the lovely view
Of Jeanne, skirt lifted from the dew,
Plucking the rose and meadow-rue
By Sleeping Water.

From Belliveau to Pointe Eglise
The little broom-like apple-trees
Are bent before the sharp sea-breeze
By Sleeping Water.

And Landry, his white hair afloat,
Crouching within his tattered coat,
Still watches for the vanished boat
By Sleeping Water.

The trim sand-pipers on the beach,
Weeting and bowing each to each,
Pace up and down the shingly reach
Of Sleeping Water.

"Wait, wait," they ever seem to shrill,
And Landry waits and hopes until
The Fundy twilight settles chill
On Sleeping Water.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

He hears the wingèd wild sea-folk
With frenzied laughter and rough croak
Scurry and scream around Grosses-Cocques
At Sleeping Water.

And "Jeanne, Jeanne, Jeanne," their pet-
ulant cry
By Sleeping Water,
Between the tossed sea and the sky;
While in the dark the tide leaps high
At Sleeping Water.

All night from loud St. Mary's Bay
At Sleeping Water,
The fog stalks in, vast, silent, grey;
All night the shuddering poplars pray
By Sleeping Water.

KISMET AND THE KING

THE king lay ill at Ispahan
And ill at rest.
All day, all night, his couriers ran
To fetch rare herbs to cure the man,
The king, oppressed
By Allah's ban in Ispahan.

The poet sat him at his feet
With lute of gold.
"Sing me a song for sultan meet,
To hush me into slumber sweet,
To hush and hold
Till they return, my couriers fleet."

From Khurasan the hot wind sped,
The hot simoom:
"His wing of flame," the sick man said,
"The fiery Angel of the Dead,
With brow of gloom.
Allah, not yet, not yet!" he said.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

The poet touched a plaintive string:

The days are two,

There are two days, he sang, O king,

When useless are the prayers we bring,

The deeds we do,

For lease of life, O mighty king.

First, on the unappointed day,

The day unset,

Men cannot kill nor tempest slay:

Yea, second on the appointed day

Of dread Kismet

Not Allah great can bar the way.

The Ethiop waved a sleepy fan

Above the bed;

Even at the gates the couriers ran,

With potent herbs to cure the man,

The great king, dead

Upon his bed in Ispahan.

ASGARDA IN BAGHDAD

UPON his silken rug the Caliph sat,
Green-turbaned, drowsy-eyed, pale-cheeked and fat;
His favourite slave drooped near him on her mat.

Without, a copper sun had glared all day
On empty streets shimmering like red-hot clay,
On quiet booth and caravanseraï.

No sound save the cicada's shrilling thin;
Like heat made vocal seemed its feverish din,
And one lone Arab cried his water-skin.

The Caliph sighed: "But Baghdad days are hot—
Asgarda, fable me some pleasant spot
Where palms and springs are and the sun shines not."

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

Her, years ago, the pampered Caliph bought
From pirates who on northern shores had fought,
Whence, save her name, no memory had she brought.

Through silken shades that shed a golden gloom
One dazzling ray crept quivering through the room,
Striking Asgarda and the lotos-bloom.

She saw no more the lilies in the jar,
For lo! a vision thick with many a star
Swept on her from her childhood's days afar.

The look within her eyes was blue like flame.
The Orient language to her lips that came
The froxy northland wonders could not name.

“ I see a place like diamond-dust all white;
Ah, Caliph Abdul, pardon thou my flight,
But my soul tingles with a strange delight.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

“ My feet break crisply through the ground’s white
crust;

On, on, I go, like pilgrim-priests who must,
Tickled by many a delicate dagger-thrust

“ From winds that make yon glittering forest clank
Like armèd men, and ranged in ghostly rank
They gleam as white as linen from the tank.

“ I reach a river sparkling with the sky,
Smooth like the floor where Dervish dances ply,
Colder than marble slab where wine-skins lie.

“ Beside its brink, grasses of crystal sheen
That clink and rattle when I press between,
Like tinkle of many a beaten tambourine.

“ Of pearls and diamonds here is precious store,
Such gems as happy Zobeide once wore
Flung in the opulent moonshine of this shore.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

“ Like chill white wine from jewel-studded bowl
Yon moonlight streams and, an enchanted goal,
Slants its long road and charms my very soul.”

She paused; no sound within the place was heard.
Breathless above her hung the glistening Kurd,
The Caliph bent to catch her murmured word.

Her soul, a-tremble, paused upon the wing;
She heard the breath of death behind her sing,
And smiling, cried she, in a voice of spring,

“ How wondrously I speed, apace, apace!
Wrapped in the vast white arms, I race, I race!
The large moon draws me with her shining face.

“ The whistling wind behind me follows fleet—”
Here she fell forward at the Caliph’s feet,
Asgarda, stricken by the deadly heat.

A GIRL OF LAZISTAN

I WAS only a girl of Lazistan.
In his veins the blood of the Sun-God ran.

He plucked me out from the soil of the street.
He called me the rose of his garden retreat.

I was his fountain that laughed in the sun,
His star that glittered when day was done.

I was the jewel that lay on his heart;
Mine was the shrine where he worshipped apart.

I was only a girl of Lazistan.
In his veins the blood of the Sun-God ran.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

He loved me, he kissed me, I lay on his breast;
I was his bulbul that sang him to rest;

Into his arms I would melt for repose
And he would enfold me as leaves do the rose.

I was only a girl of Lazistan.
In his veins the blood of the Sun-God ran.

They came in the midst of the dark fragrant night
And the almond-tree blooms fluttered down in affright.

Of a sudden They swooped, like sirocco They came
And They blasted the flower of our love as with flame.

Those purple-clad Priests, with their arms waving
wide,
Woe, woe to the follower their faith who defied.

For I was a girl of Lazistan.
In his veins the blood of the Sun-God ran.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

They say the Eternally Pure decree
Doom for lovers who loved as we.

For him in the Tower of Silence a bed
And Parsî prayers at sunrise said.

For me to be hurled like refuse far
Into the river that runs by Istahr.

In an hour They will come and take me away.
Yet he loved me and kissed me but yesterday.

The Eternally Pure have decreed in vain,
We care not, not we, for death and its pain,
For the souls become one of two lovers slain,

Even mine, a girl of Lazistan
And his, whose blood from the Sun-God ran.

CAPTAIN AND KING

HE is my captain and my king
In whom I trust.
Yea, should this earth and firmament
Crumble to dust
Still might his voice reanimate
My mouldering clay
And his fine touch would lead me forth
To Realms of Day.

THE POET MOON

HOW the palms tossed at Bordighera,
How the grey olives blew,
How vivid shone the Mediterranean
 'Twixt shaken plumes of yew!
Then those dim miles of violets,
 The depth, the hue,
 The scents that flew,
The shell-pink villas, cypress-closes
And walls that gushed with heavy roses.

At twilight that fantastic rock,
 A castle by the sea,
And the long flaming ribboned west,
 A road to Memory,
And that bright trembling crescent moon,
 A poet-thing
 That seemed to sing,
Inscribing with its fairy feather
Lyrics of love and golden weather.

ALPINE-GLOW

WHEN all the range is violet smoke
And all the valley night
One peak swims like a sculptured isle,
An amethyst of light.

It seems a bright and visioned mount
Upheld by cloudy hands,
Illumined by some dreamed-of glow
That falls on heavenly lands.

It floats a neighbour to the stars
That glint the twilight's blue;
Transfigured, a Beatitude,
Like that high thought of You.

THE SLAIN ONES

WHAT of the gallant dead
Borne from the field?
Oh, the draped silent head,
The empty shield!

Kiss the swift moveless feet
That won their goal;
Crown the unseeing brow,
Joy to that deathless soul!

*What of the gallant hearts
Slain, that live on,
Who eat their daily bread
When joy is done?*

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

Nay, not for them the wreath,
The bugle's note;
Theirs to taste morn and night
The sword within their throat.

*What of the gallant hearts
Slain, that must live?*
God of the Shrouded Hands,
Shall they forgive?

TWILIGHT IN ITALY

THE Rhaetian hills are blotted out; mist-billows
wreathe and roll;
A lamp shines at that shepherd's door like a large
aureole.

The good grey sheep come tinkling home unto that
shepherd true,
And all my wandering day-thoughts go climbing up
to you.

THE UNATTAINABLE

HARK, the pipes of the upland blowing crisp
On the riotous joy of the snow-coloured Visp!
The freshness of ferns that drip in the shade
And the long laughter of that wild cascade.

But high above that shattered valley and the torn
Elf-laughter of the Visp hurled out upon the morn,—
Far, far above, against the heavenly blue upborne,
The vastness and the silence of the Balfrinhorn!
White, gentle, terrible, against the blue upborne.

Oh, love, do I forget one briefest space
The high tranquillity of your lone face?
I pray to God to grant me of His grace
One moment to forget that star-like face,
That immemorial forehead killing me
With yearning for the thing that cannot be.

COMPENSATION

WHEN you that were the light of life went out
To walk Somewhere afar,
There fell upon me all the shapeless doubt
Of night without a star.

By day the weary sunlight seemed to flare
Upon a swimming land;
By night I kissed your bright pathetic hair
And touched your wasted hand.

Ever I held you to my breaking heart,
Not as I knew you, glad,
But a pale shadow Death had called apart
And with my own grief, sad.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

Till, you remember, once you came to me
In the long hours of night;
Blue were your eyes and smiling joyfully,
Your voice, the old delight.

Now often when the house is still I hear
Your hands upon the keys,
Just as you used in many a bygone year,
Awakening melodies.

And sometimes when in deepest dreams I bide
Shut out from day's alarms,
I find a joy worth all the world beside,
The heaven of your arms.

THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM

LOVE, you will not remember as I do,
—I who remember all for love of you,—
The glittering race of the Barberine
And its seven-fold leap through the dark ravine.

*Oh, hurry, ere that heaven you seek be lost,
For who has heaven to gain counts not the cost.
The race is perilous and there is no sun;
Who knows if at the end sweet heaven be won?
He plunged unrecking to that last swift run;
Even so for love of you would I have done.*

Perhaps you have forgotten how one day
The mists were wreathed illimitably grey,
And how we said no word, but took our way
By the embattled gorge of the loud Borgne,
Water-sculptured and torrent-torn.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

And the stern granite of my life seemed wrought
To sculptured grooves of anguish by the thought,
The steady, hopeless, hungry thought of you,
Forever and forever flowing through.

At eve we lifted up our eyes and saw
The wonder and the splendour and the awe:—
Rose-purple sunset like a flaming tree,
And that last mystic glow on Veisivi,
And, blown out like a passionate white corolla,
The shimmering arcs of showery Arolla.

*Oh, passionate, unattainable white soul,
My prayer, my despair, my joy, my dole,
My life, my death, my after-death-the-Goal!*

THE HEART'S COUNTRY

HILL people turn to their hills;
Sea folk are sick for the sea;
Thou art my land and my country,
And my heart calls out for thee.

The bird beats his wings for the open,
The captive burns to be free;
But I—I cry at thy window,
For thou art my liberty.

THE MOUNTAIN GOD

THERE is a mountain god, they say, who dwells
Remote, untouched by prayers or temple bells;
A god irrevocably who compels
The hidden fountains and the secret wells
Upward and outward from their cloistered cells;
He calls them, calls them, all the lustrous day,
And not one rippling child dare disobey.
There is a god who dwells within your eyes
Like that veiled god of mountain mysteries,
Compelling all my secret soul to rise
Unto a flooded brim of still surprise,
Flooded and flushed beneath the god's great eyes.
Belovèd, you have called me to the day,
And all the fountains of my life obey.

THE PILGRIM BELL

THE pilgrim bell keeps calling me,
 (Patrizio, Patrizio.)
And all the folk are winding up
By that steep path and slow,

From all the little villages
 Mezzegra, Azzano,
And still the bell keeps calling me
 (Patrizio, Patrizio.)

Giustina once came calling me
 (Patrizio, Patrizio.)
Her eyes were dark like purple grapes,
Her small face was aglow.
"Giojetta, run away," I said.
 I turned my busy wheel.
"The rich folk want their olive wood
 To shine like apple-peel."

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

I did not even kiss her lips,
The sun is red and low.
Once more to hear that little voice!
(Patrizio, Patrizio.)

Santa Maria on the hill
You cannot succour me,
Though I should climb from morn till night
To reach Mount Calvary
And pray a thousand prayers before
Thy Son upon the tree,
But still the bell keeps calling out,
(Arise, arise and go!)
If I could hear that little voice!
(Patrizio, Patrizio.)

The pilgrim bell keeps calling on,
And San Giovanni too,
But San Martino's purple rock
Yearns down into the blue.
The black boats creep from shore to shore
From Crocione's feet
To where Tremezzo stretches out
Her plane-tree tented street.
It is Giustina's voice I hear,

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

Giojetta in the skies,
Giojetta, pleading, passionate,
 “ Dear Virgin, I arise.
Peccavi, yet there still is time;
 Peccavi, well I know.
Sweet bell, you are a long-lost voice,”
 (Patrizio, Patrizio.)

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

THE COUNTRY THAT HE KNEW

THE river was floored with the sky,
Pale clouds floated therein.
The sad still hemlocks grew adown,
And old dreams walked within.

Oh, that sky in the river deeper and deeper
Than the blue arch overhead,
And the grass in the river that waits for a reaper,
Like folk who dream they are dead!

The stars in the river blur and quiver
Miraculously faint.
*Father, 'tis there that I shall find
Ease for my long complaint.*

The stars do not drown, far down, far down,
The dark woods do not blow,
That flying bird no ripple stirred.
Oh, father, let me go.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

It is the country that I knew
Ere ever I was born;
I cried for the lost calms of it,
I dreamed it yester-morn.

My little son, no land is there,
No sky, no cloud, no star.
Nay, you would never come to it,
Though you should fall leagues far.

*Father, lean closer to the edge,
Or else your eyes are blind.*
I see two things move movelessly,
Their looks are deep and kind.

The ripple from our sliding keel
Troubles their glassy faces.
Look, how they shake like candle flames,
Blown to their primal places.

My soul is that pale water-weed
With spread translucent hands;
I swoon me downward to the dimness
Of those deep underlands.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

I bathe in the lost calms of it
As on my natal morn,
For 'tis the country that I knew
Ere ever I was born.

IN A RUINED ABBEY

THE moon blows toward the broken tower,
A wingèd sphere of fire,
And through the ivy over-streaming
Rose-window, arch and crumbling choir
Trembles the wind in ecstasy
His fingers of desire.

Where lords and ladies long ago,—
—Yolande and Mordred,—
Knelt pale before the crucifix,
With bells upflung and incense shed,
Now many a pink-tipped daisy lifts
Its fair unknowing head.

Where scutcheons gleamed, and lance and helm,
Trophies of sacred fight,
And the great windows gloomed and glowed
Like jewels dusky-bright—
The eternal hills look gravely through
These arches of the night.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

A thousand memories walk tiptoe,
 Sainted, occult, unspelt;
An elder time's envelopment,
 Like mists that blow and melt,
So we that stray here hand in hand
 Have on our foreheads dimly felt
The chrysmal kiss processional
 Of Presences that knelt.

The moon shakes at the unportalled door,
 A sailing sphere of fire;
The shadows lie all breathlessly
 Still as intense desire.
Beloved,—thus our hearts are hushed
 Yet mounting ever higher,
Until they mix in one clear note,—
(Oh, lyric heart, to sing, to float!)
 Heaven-smitten like a lyre.

THE CURSE ON DUNOON

THE sea and the sand
Go hand in hand.
“I am Memory,” quoth the sea,
“A sleepless mind,
I urge, reiterate.”
“I am Vengeance,” quoth the sand.
“Lidless and blind,
I scourge, obliterate.”

The pines kept watch beside Dunoon;
They slanted toward the sea.
Betwixt their plumage leaned the moon,
Pointed at him
A finger slim
When stumbling through the twilight dim
Came shapes and revelry,
Faint footsteps from the sea,
Soft thunder of the sliding sands
And footsteps from the sea.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

She blew across the yellow dune;
 She came a mystery,
A vagrant and a nameless tune.
 Quick of the year
 Hummed at his ear,
Sap of young leaves, a prophet clear.
 The pines cried: "She is yours;
 Ecstasy that endures!"
The insistent sea sang in his blood;
 The stars were lamps and lures.

She was the witch-light of Dunoon,
 Scooped from the sparkling sea,
With hands like golden cups of June.
 "O rainbow Mary,
 Wild sea-fairy!"
But spirits do not love to tarry.
 She gave him kisses three,
 Foam of the dying sea.
The dunes sobbed all night long for her;
 The pines talked to the sea.

"I am the master of Dunoon,
 Dunoon beside the sea.
 (Vision of Mary
 Tarry! tarry!)

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

Death comes to take me—none too soon!
Cursed be my lands
If any hands
Cut down the wood beside the sands
Where Mary came to me.”
The sands heard and the sea.
Soft thunder of the sliding sands
And footsteps from the sea.

The sea and the sand
Go hand in hand;
“I am Memory,” quoth the sea,
“A sleepless mind,
I urge, reiterate.”
“I am Vengeance,” quoth the sand,
“Lidless and blind,
I scourge, obliterate.”

He died, and still the pine trees stood
Communing with the sea,
Till stranger folk struck down the wood.
Then the slow sands
Reached forth their hands,
Crawled up along the wasted lands;

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

Also in memory
Muttered the grey-lipped sea.
Soft thunder of the sliding sands
And long wash of the sea.

The blind dunes quenched the springing land;
The strong remembering sea
Followed the lithe heels of the sand.
The limpets spawn
Where years ago,
Her bright feet rippled up the lawn;
Meagre crustaceans crook
Through every oozy nook,
And where she danced between the doors
Pale polyps peer and look.

The sea and the sand
Go hand in hand;
“I am Memory,” quoth the sea,
“A sleepless mind,
I urge, reiterate.”
“I am Vengeance,” quoth the sand,
“Lidless and blind,
I scourge, obliterate.”

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

WE WERE LOVERS

(Having neither beginning of DAYS nor end of LIFE.)

IN the dark unwritten ages innocent of time and
being,
When a million voiceless aeons
Flashed and perished like the fireflies
Spangling a brief summer dusk,
In those dim and elder ages, you and I were boon
companions,
We were elements that mingled marvellously
In the dark unwritten ages innocent of time and
being.

I was blown a nebulous vapour, giant wraith of wraths
terrific
At the birth-hour of an ancient unimaginable nomad;
You the lightnings at my centre,
Rosy heat and lambent dartings,
Treading out my mirky vintage joyously,
At the birth-hour of an ancient unimaginable nomad.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

You were once that luminous body
Born of blazing revolutions of uncounted speeding
cycles,
Swift, centrifugal, amazing,
Shot from brightness to the blackness of adventurous
infinity;
I the meteor flaming after by inevitable sequence,
Ripping the astonished ether
With my savage, slashing sword-track,
Swift, centrifugal, amazing.

When the morning stars had voices,
And the round rim of the heaven tenantless of flying
creatures,
Peered above the primal ocean,
When the troubled waters lifted, chanting greatly
their unease,—
Heaving, tossing, curling ever round the vast vague
of the planet,
I a wave that sought forever;
You the sweet and powdered starlight,
Light white foam upon my forehead,
Following my swinging footsteps laughingly
Through the large unmeasured spaces
Of the blind tormented darkness,
When the troubled waters lifted, chanting greatly
their unease.

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

Or when motion was extinguished,
You the moon were sculptured shield-like,
Unattainable wild white heraldry
On the swept blue fainting midnight;
I, the tide that knelt and trembled, climbed and
shuddered, falling backward,
Calling to you in my anguish till you pitied me and
calmed me,
Melted me to lucent wonder,
In the swept blue fainting midnight.

I remember, too, the twilights when you wore the
young moon's crescent,
And you lay within my bosom delicately.
I remember, too, the twilights.

Then from out its mothering whirlwinds,
Seethe and swirl of coiling chaos,
The primeval earth grew conscious of the sun's first
dreadful dawning;
I, the sullen mist that slumbered on the cold mouth
of the marshes;
You the beam that drew me upward
Till I shared your solar splendours,

PART ONE: THE UNATTAINABLE

Far above the virginal shining peaks of continents,
Far above and drenched with gladness;
Far above and drenched with gladness speech-
lessly,
We were elements that mingled marvellously.

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

SLEEPING ERINNYS

I AM Erinnys. Pity me. I lie asleep
And all the sins of all the world
Within my heart I keep.

*She is Erinnys. Pity her. How wan her sleep.
For still across her dreams
A cry for justice streams
And the tall spear is whirled.*

Some sin and smite and laugh. Some quench the
hearth-fire's ember.

These may forget and pass. I follow and remember.
I am Erinnys. Pity me. My cheeks are always wet
And my hair wild with haste, I who would fain forget.

My sisters of the joyous birth, you Nectar-Bearing
Sweet,

You, Crescent-Crowned beside the spring, you of the
Silver Feet,—

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

Give me one bright Olympian hour, one golden cup
to ken,
Or sleep unvisited by dreams of dooms of sinning
men.
O kings and mighty conquerors, lay down your
dripping sword!
My scourge shall goad you to the place where no man
calls you lord.
O all ye fateful lovers desiring over-much,
Who win a flaming kiss, it is my torch you touch.
Listen, 'tis their remorse unborn that haunts my
tongue,
Because, though sinless, I have fled since time was
young,
With wastrels, wantons, all the May-Day throng,—
Therefore I am unutterably wrung.

*She is the goddess in whose noble eyes
The unendurable accusation lies
That rends the secret heart of such as thou.*

*Yea, this heart-breaking eloquence of her look
Is for the tears that men have scorned to shed
And the atonement falls upon her head.*

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

*See the spent lines, the darkness on her brow,
The stricken beauty of her lips.
Perhaps thou art the sinner whom she strips;*

I am Erinnys of the lifted snake
And the unsilenced mouth.
I listen, follow, follow, overtake.
It is not mine to waver or delay.
I listen, follow, follow, overtake,
And at the end I slay.

THE FUGITIVES

WE are they that go, that go,
Plunging before the hidden blow.
We run the byways of the earth,
For we are fugitive from birth,
Blindfolded, with wide hands abroad
That sow, that sow the sullen sod.

We cannot wait, we cannot stop
For flushing field or quickened crop;
The orange bow of dusky dawn
Glimmers our smoking swathe upon;
Blindfolded still we hurry on.

How do we know the ways we run
That are blindfolded from the sun?
We stagger swiftly to the call,
Our wide hands feeling for the wall.

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

Oh, ye who climb to some clear heaven
By grace of day and leisure given,
Pity us, fugitive and driven—
The lithe whip curling on our track,
The headlong haste that looks not back!

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

A CHALLENGE
(In Beauchamp Chapel)

HERE do they lie, like mute engraven psalms,
Crossed feet and smiling lips and folded palms,
Where travellers pass or pause and muse
 awhile,
Struck to the heart by the remorseless calms
 Of those draped feet, that still unsmiling
 smile.

A thousand springs have leaped to tender flame,
The years have wheeled to centuries since they came,
 Dead, proud and smiling to their stone repose.
What do they reck of youth, or love, or shame,
 Or the red heart of yonder English rose?

Death, it can never be that as they lie,
So shall this eager passionate burning I,
 Thrilled through and through with life's
 magnificence,
Drunk with my birthright, stung with ecstasy;
 Death, I'll have none of thy vast insolence!

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

AS A LITTLE CHILD

I REMEMBER my cry at the cardinal flower
 When I first found its hidden place;
I remember the streamers of northern lights,
 I, awake in my bed one hour;
I remember the look on my father's face
 When I did a childish wrong;
I remember my first loneliness,
 How the hours were long, were long;
I remember the touch of my mother's shawl
 As it hung on the closet door,
 And the loving folds it wore;
I remember a toy in the baby's hand
 When he fell asleep and smiled.
This is the prayer I pray to-night,
 Not for joy or a life undefiled,
But that always the simple things may come
Thus to thrill my heart, to burst my heart,
 As they did to the little child.

FORERUNNERS

IN the first sleep-watch of the night
With dreams that flit and hesitate,
Hark for the tokens of our flight,
Lost voices seeking each his mate:

A hurrying step along the road,
A knock, a cry, but only one.
“Nay, heed them not for they shall be
Forgotten with the morning sun.”

These are the tokens of our flight;
We, nameless ones who go before,
Who stop to call a comrade soul
But find no latch at any door.

That drifting smoke across the plain,
That footfall fading by the sea,
Perchance our camp fires dying out,
Our passionate steps no more to be.

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

The vagrant red of autumn leaf,
The haunting echo and its grief,
Luring you on from hill to hill,
The vagrant red, the wandering sigh,
It is the life-blood that we spill.

Yet we are nameless before God;
We have nor grave nor epitaph;
And where we perished of our thirst,
Yea, where there was no drop to quaff,
A spring shall gush from our dead bones
And full-fed ones sit down and laugh.

THE RAILWAY YARD

INTO the blackness they grind
With ever slackening speed
And out to the widening light
With the thunder of valves that are freed.
Myriad headlights,
Green lights and red lights,
A tangle of sparks and of darks;
A thousand lives and a thousand souls
Poured out to the city's blend;
A thousand lives and a thousand souls
Sped forth to their journey's end.

O, neighbour, what is the end you seek?

*There is none to reply though the dead should
speak.*

Click of a switch, a lever's turn,
The clang of the opened gate.
Has the hour struck? Will the train be late?
One prays to his God and one curses his fate.

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

The lover smiles as he touches her hand,—
And the outgoing passengers wait.
It is only two who thread the throng.
A thousand lives and a thousand souls
Pass by and hurry along.

There are some who stand and never go
When the porter opens the gate:
“ Good-bye, good-bye, come back to us soon ! ”
Their heart is sick with the merciless tune:
Whoot, whoot, hough-hough, zig-zig and away.
To-morrow we follow but never to-day.

A thousand lives and a thousand souls
Who have cast their lot together;
And some set out for a whole new life
And some for a change of weather;
For a dance or for death.
Yet they sit and they sleep,
Or they stare at the engine's curling breath;
They sigh or they smile
At each vanishing mile.

O, soul, give your neighbour greeting!

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

But faces are clouds
Like the flashing trees
And the dizzy houses retreating.
They are running a race, though they know it not,
With a thousand lives that have gone before;
And a thousand souls with a thousand goals
Must press through a single door.

*O, neighbour, think, as the drive-wheel spins,
Of the gutted lamps and the torch-like sins,
Of the babes unborn and the yawning gins!
What is the crown and who is it that wins?*

THE HOUSE TO HIS FIRST MISTRESS

A. L. W.

ACROSS my threshold they have gone,
Many the steps and sweet,
But yours alone that I love best
Is the rhythm I repeat,
From days when you and I were young
And autumn flamed along the street,
Remembered trailings of your skirt
And hauntings of your feet.

The generations come and go
And I have held them dear:
Between the lattice and the hearth
They dance and disappear,
But echoing through their songs at night
It is your voice I hear
That knew me when I was unknown,
Conceived me out of dust and stone,
And loved me in that bygone year.

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

I took you to my lonely arms,
 You were the soul of me;
There was no speech between us twain,
 There needed not to be;
Your watchful nights were mine, were mine,
 And mine your minstrelsy.
Your seal upon my forehead is,
 Forever still to be.

Forever with the wheeling heavens
 When the year begins to wane,
—The falling leaf, the golden tree,
 The melody of rain—
Lo, you shall dip between my doors
 Or glorify my pane,
Singing that first old joy in me,
 The vision of your brain,
That I may reach remembering hands
 To greet you home again.

IT IS OUR SIN TO HAVE REMEMBERED

IF this were my last hour on earth
And I might speak with thee,
“Friend,” I would say, “after my death,
Think gentle thoughts of me;
For thou, of all the friends I had,
Pierced deepest in my side,
Teaching me love as high as heaven,
(Thy love so soon that died)
Teaching me love as high as heaven,
Mine to abide.

Therefore when I am in my grave
Think gentle thoughts of me;
Forgive that poor unconquered fault,
That love denied by thee.”
For they who rob us of our hearts
Forgive us not.
*It is our sin to have remembered
When they—forgot.*

THE PAST

I WENT into a shadowy land
 Seeking Myself.
I met and seized one by the hand,
 “Thou art Myself.”

“Thou hast my hair, my lips, my eyes,
 The look I wore.”
She answered in disdainful wise,
 “Thyself, no more.”

“Strange ways you go, strange cups you
 drink,
 Withheld from me.
Mysterious are the thoughts you think,
 I know not thee.”

So she that was Myself withdrew
 Into the night;
Coldly the fog-wind rose and blew
 And blurred my sight.

RECOGNITION

THE Earth lay dark as some closed book,
 Featureless, shrouded wholly,
 And melancholy,
While far above her vainly shook
The dumb Sky's passionate downward look.

Then the swift lightning flashed between,
 Fearful as Joy's first cry,
 And Earth and Sky
Each saw the other in that keen
White marvellous moment's leap and sheen.

Thus we, beloved, yearning, not aware,
 Till suddenly there came
 The look of flame
And in that instant's vision rare
Each knew the other's soul laid bare.

A SINGLE MIND

HOW the ship strains and struggles,
Leaps through the mirk of night.
How the fierce ocean springs to oppose,
Flings up its breast in fight.

Steady the ship swings onward,
Disdainful, deaf, amot
Save for its one vast passion,
To port, to port, to port!

Buffeted, smothered, blinded,
Ploughs through the storm my soul,
Obstreperous circumstance
Betwixt me and my goal.

Thick darkness is upon me,
Huge elements that thwart;
Steady, my soul, ride onward,
And mayst thou win the port!

THE SUPREME FORGIVENESS

THEY have forgiven me, these that I have wronged,
While you still mindful are.
Because that I have suffered wrong from you,
Therefore you stand afar.
Yet I do not accuse at all, my love,
Nay, *Mercy* cry.
They that love least, they hurt the most.
(God, that through them we die!)

THE SORROWFUL STREAM

IN the Land of Life it floweth and floweth,
The Sorrowful Stream,
And through its waters each mortal goeth,
However he dream
He will never reach the pitiless beach
Of the Sorrowful Stream.

There are some and the waters but lap their feet
Of the Sorrowful Stream,
And some, 'gainst whose breast the billows beat
And the foam-crests gleam,
And others there be, like wrecks of the sea,
Washed away by the Sorrowful Stream.

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

THEOPHANY

I HAVE found, I have found, a supremest delight,
And my spirit is stirred and the tranquil waters,
 O blest of men's daughters,
All my future I know will be holy and bright.

Long was I alone nor did I repine,
For I said: "It is better, my heart, to be quiet!"
 But sweet is love's riot
And dark was my life till it flowed into thine.

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

THE VAIN PRINCE

WHOM once the purple prince crowned with his
 roses
 Latterly he counts least;
Ineffaceable autographs or relentless mirrors,—
 They chronicle the ages since that feast.

THE WEDDING GUEST

YEA, I am he that cometh to the feast,
Newborn that night;
Naked, unblessed, unbidden by the priest,
Tall as high heaven, yet littler than the least.

My footstep trembles down the waving chord,
Floats in the rose,
So even they that laugh across the board
By the averted lid salute me lord.

Lo, they refuse to look me in the eye,
To touch my hand,
Yet in the space 'twixt question and reply
The silence of my mouth shall make outcry.

I stand far off, fearing the dusty ways
These two may tread;

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

Natheless, between the altar and the aisles,
They hear my sob under a sea of smiles.

*Fair is the face of Paradise, pathetically sweet,
Yet fourfold swifter otherwhere travel the questing
feet.*

INTROSPECT

MY window looks upon the night,
The pine woods and the cloister-gloom.
Her window looks upon the light,
And violet peaks of prospect bright
And miles of meadow bloom.

At noon I hear unending beat
Of solemn breakers on the shore,
And know that round her high retreat
The rapturous thrush is carolling sweet
His golden *I adore*.

Betwixt my trees in afternoon,
The silent shadows stand,
Watching for night that falls too soon,
—The night that falls without a moon,—
To crouch at my right hand.

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

Once at my bidding did they come,
Once—but long time ago,
Listed my voice—now I am dumb
The while I hear their phantom hum
And flitting to and fro.

I sit and stare behind my pane
Into the spectral mist,
Dimly desiring to attain
Beyond, above my sullen plain
Her window, glory-kissed.

THE DYING CHILD

I CAN see the trees of heaven
And their branches drip with dew.
But the River of Death is blacker than ice,
O mother, I cannot pass through.
I can see the smiling angels.
I want to fold my face within their skirts.
But the River of Death strangles my breath.
O mother, I cannot swim through
Alone, without you, without you!

THE UNREMEMBERED
(Fragments of a Lost Memory)

WHERE have they gone, the unremembered things,
The hours, the faces,
The trumpet-call, the wild boughs of white spring?
Would I might pluck you from forbidden spaces,
All ye, the vanished tenants of my places!

Stay but one moment, speak that I may hear,
Swift passer-by!
The wind of your strange garments in my ear
Catches the heart like a belovèd cry
From lips, alas, forgotten utterly.

An odour haunts, a colour in the mesh,
A step that mounts the stair;
Come to me, I would touch your living flesh—
Look how they disappear, ah, where, ah, where?
Because I name them not, deaf to my prayer.

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

If I could only call them as I used,
Each by his name!
That violin—what ancient voice that mused!
Yon is the hill, I see the beacon flame.
My feet have found the road where once I came.
Quick!—but again the dark, darkness and shame.

AFTER VICTORY

GRANT me strength to face my conquered;
Teach me the smile of pride;
Give me patient endurance
For my deeds that are glorified;
But after the splendour sweeps past,
One little hour to abide
Alone and in darkness at last
With the simple joys that have died.

BEYOND THE SPECTRUM

WE cannot look beyond
The spectrum's mystic bar.
Beyond the violet light
Yea, other lights there are
And waves that touch us not
Voyaging far.

Vast ordered forces whirl,
Invisible, unfelt,
Their language less than sound,
Their name unspelt,
Suns cannot brighten them
Nor white heat melt.

We chip an eye-hole through,
(Swedenborg, Roentgen, Hertz,)
Into that wallèd land,
Glimpsed as by candle-spurts.
Our naked ignorance
It hurts, it hurts!

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

Or, in the clammy dark
We dig, as dwarfs for coal.
Yet one Mind fashioned it
And Us, a luminous whole,
As lastly, thou shalt see,
Thou, O my soul.

THE CHILD THAT ONCE YOU WERE

O HOPELESS face of middle-age,
O disappointed eyes,
And lips of cold finality,
What sad soul stalks behind that cage,
Those stern bars of mortality?
I saw the child that once you were
Flit to your look one day,
A tender boyhood just beginning,—
And my quick throat rose sharp with tears
To think of all the sodden years
Since then, and all the sinning.
The trusting child that once you were,
Not wholly drugged to sleep!
And all these dreadful spades of earth
To bury you more deep.

THE DIARY

WHAT matters it on such or such a date
What did betide?
We have the present glory; what is worth
Aught else beside?

“Nay,” said the other, “when we read this page
Some future day,
The old forgotten joy will be renewed:
Ah, who can say?”

But we so altered by the lapse of time,
It will seem vain;
This brook song and those tender words we spoke,—
An idle strain.

“Nay,” said the other, “if this golden hour
We do enshrine,
Long afterward ’twill walk like morning with us,
Our youth divine.”

HEIMWEH

MY soul cries out with longing
For that dear house my home;
It crowns the end of every way
Down which I roam.

It hath a portal open
Unto the happy sun,
And casements star-embroidered
When day is done.

And best of all and fairest,
Serenely set apart,
I see Her waiting for me,
The woman of my heart.

Her hands are made for loving,
Her lips for stainless truth,
And her clear eyes are beautiful
With changeless youth.

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

My soul cries out with longing
For that dear house my home;
It crowns the end of every way
Down which I roam.

Yet have I never found it,
Though still it beckons me
With sweet and poignant promise
Of what shall be.

THE ELDEST BORN

I WAS a little baby, dead
 That earthly morn;
They gave me a white rose to keep;
They sang: "It is not death but sleep."
She cried: "My eldest born!"

I was a little spirit then
 Reaching to God;
An eager ignorant upward flame,
Cleaving the darkness whence I came,
 Tiptoe above the clod.

She cried: "The feet that I have kissed
 Cold in the grave;
The shut mouth and the eyelids dim—
O God, the marble look of him!"
 I, at heaven's architrave,

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

Trembled but shrilled aloud, "I come,
O Christ, my brother."
The Beautiful leaned down and smiled:
"Go back to earth, thou little child,
And comfort thy sad mother.

"For when in dreams thou hoverest near,
Gladdening her eyes,
A glimpse of heaven she shall obtain,
And drinking of her cup of pain,
Thyself shalt be made wise."

.

Time washes up along our shore,
A vast calm sea;
And I have learned the weight of tears,
Sin's colour and the length of years,
The stir of things to be.

My brothers win the earthly goal
With toil and stress;
Gone is their infancy divine
And on their brows is writ the sign
Of earth's forgetfulness.

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

But God's large moments have made room
 Even for this,
That all unguessed of them, unseen,
Like a slim flower I wave between
 And meet my mother's kiss.

She folds me to her lonely heart
 At grey of morn;
A little child I am to her,
As in those wondrous days that were,
 A babe, her eldest-born.

THE DREAM-CHILD

OH, the Dream-Child, the Dream-Child,
That never yet has been!
He creeps into her bosom
When winter nights are keen.

Her mouth upon his eyes, his hair;
"Sweet, how I worship thee!"
Oh, the Dream-Child, the Dream-Child,
God! that shall never be.

Last night she heard him wailing
Out in the sleety din,
"All little babes are warm in bed,
Dear mother, let me in!"

She opened wide her empty arms:
"Creep close into thy nest.
Look, I will warm thy hands, thy feet,
Thy lips upon my breast."

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

Yet still she hears him wailing,
 “ Dear mother, let me in.
All little babes are warm in bed——”
 God, is it not thy sin

To let the Dream-Child wander
 A poor forbidden guest;
The barren mother wait and wait
 With passion at her breast?

THE SOLITARY

GOD said unto the soul:
Go thou thy way alone
And make no moan.

The cup of comradery
Is not for thee,

Nor memory's golden sheaf
Of loves too brief;

Nor tears of sorrow shed
Above thy dead;

A pale impersonal strife
Thine outward life;

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

Within, thy bosom torn
By thoughts unborn,

The soul said unto God:
Nay, give me joy and woe;
'Tis better so.

The seal of commonplace
Upon my face;

No seething strange unrest
Within my breast,

But a dear hand to hold
As I grow old.

God said unto the soul:
This is the common lot,
Thy portion not.

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

What life and loving are
Know thou afar.

Events beside thy door
Shall pause no more

Than once to give thee cry
And hurry by.

The soul said unto God:
And how, Lord, wilt thou bless
My loneliness?

God said unto the soul:
I will anoint thine eyes
To make thee wise.

Thy vision shall be keen
Of things unseen,

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

That even as thou dost brood
In solitude,

This marvellous inner sense
Shall recompense;

Joys thou hast never had
Shall make thee glad,

And love that is not thine
Thy heart entwine.

THEY THAT STAND ON THE EDGE

WE stand on the edge of your kingdom,
Looking in, looking in.
You lean to us out of your gardens,
“Behold, it is pleasant within!”

You nod to us out of your palace:
“Behold the work of our hands,
Mosaic and marble and statue,
And beauty from many lands!”

Like children who call to the beggars:
“O tarry and see us play!”
But where shall they go at supper-time,
Beggars, at close of the day?

We stand on the edge of glory
When the golden banners wave.
Oh, to be one of the victors,
Or dead in a glorious grave!

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

*To the road again, ye failers,
The hour and the power have flown.
Go search for your own lost kingdom,
The song and the sword and the throne.*

We linger, heart-sick and forgotten,
On the worn and abandoned trail
That leads to a crumbling kingdom,
We that dream and that fail.

For we dream that we come to our kingdom,
Looking in, looking in;
And our phantom selves they beckon to us,
“Be glad and enter within!”

We set our foot to the threshold,
We reach our hand to the door;
Lo, the House is a heap of ashes
And we take to the road once more.

THE TORTURED MILLIONS

THE cry of the tortured millions rises to me
Like the cry of a glacial river in its gorge
And the smoke of their suffering surges upward to me
Like the mighty clouds of the twilight valley lands.
I shut my lids in the dark and I see them toiling,
The burdened backs and the glazing eyes and the
fettered hands.

They are dying that I may live, the tortured millions,
By the Ohio river, the Euphrates, the Rhone.
They wring from the rocks my gold, the tortured
millions;
Sleepless all night they mix my daily bread;
With heavy feet they are trampling out my vintage;
They go to a hungry grave that I may be fed.

They do not know my face from a million faces,
Nor have I ever beheld those poor oppressed.
I only hear the sound of their groans in the valley,

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

The hiss and the grind and the heat of their torture-
wheels,

Engine and oven and murderous flying loom,
Poison of dust and faces sheet-white in the gloom.

I do not demand their service, no, not I.

They are my slaves whom I wish to be free and
happy?

But I may not free them or thank them or mercy cry.
Hunger and thirst and cold and aching bodies,
This is the priceless price that buys my health.
Emptiness, hopelessness, pitiful wickedness, this,
This is the stuff I sew for the purse of my wealth.

What shall I do for my slaves who work without hire,
What shall I do, I who have asked them not?
Shall I fold my hands on my mountain-peak in silence?
This is the natural order, this the common lot.
I will call to them, I who am one but they are many,
To cease their toil; but no, they obey me not.

I warm my hands at the fires of ruining houses;
On a dying mother's breasts I sink my head;
Last night my feet were faint from idleness,
I bathed my feet in blood her children shed.
O thou eternal Law, I wish this not to be.
Nay, raise them from the dust and punish me.

THE UNKNOWN QUANTITY

I AM that figure standing in the dark
And just beyond the plain equation mark.

Though sometimes clothed in robes of A or B
Yet still behind the veil I baffle thee.

The things X equals, nay, they are not X,
But lying prophets all, to lure, perplex,

To lead thee up and down the weary slate
While lurking on the other side I wait;

And all thy columns fallen into wrecks
Thou stumblest back to where I still am X,

Impreguably ensconced, smiling and cool,
To flout thy skill and keep thee After School.

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

Nought is a gateless Wall of frightful stones,
And Minus is a Cave of Dead Men's Bones.

My habit is the place where never yet
Was foot of living child or teacher set.

I am the Man who wears the Iron Mask,
The Shore of Italy, the Unfinished Task,
The Headless Horseman riding through the dark,
The Unknown Sign beyond the equation mark.

GENIUS

WHAT seest thou on yonder desert plain,
Large, vague and void?
*I see a city full of flickering streets,
I hear the hum of myriad engine beats.*
What seest thou?
I see a desert plain
Large, vague and void.

What seest thou in yonder human face,
Pale, frail and small?
*I read a page of poetry, of sin,
I see a soul by tragedy worn thin.*
What seest thou?
I see a human face
Pale, frail and small.

What seest thou at yonder dim cross-roads
Beside that shuttered inn?

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

*Untravelled Possibility,
The Inn of Splendid Mystery.
What seest thou?
I see the dim cross-roads
Beside a shuttered inn.*

THE PROPHET

To speak one burning Word
Thou shalt be heard,
Yet that one Word a sting
Of suffering
And on thy lips a torch
To sear and scorch
Until thou dost set free
Its utmost plea.

*(Rather than this fierce brand
An empty hand.
Fling it beyond my reach
Lord, I beseech!)*

Nay, thou art born with this
One road to Bliss.
If thou the gift deny
'Twill be a cry

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

Of everlasting fear,
Of murder in thine ear;
A sword within thy side,
This gift denied.

*(What, then, if I obey
'And go my way?)*

The world it shall illume,
Thyself consume.
For even in thy despite
This Flame shall write,
Sealing thine ecstasy
And tragedy,
And yet thy birthright given,
The price of Heaven.

EXTINCTION

FROM Himalaya's lofty blue-bright snows
A river springs, as ancient travellers tell,
That leaping white through tiger forests fell
Into an endless tropic plain outflows,
Where by their huts swart Hindoos, sweltering, doze
Beneath a sky like Krishna's brazen bell,
Dreaming perhaps of some palm-darkened dell
When on their quivering roofs sirocco blows.
Unheeding of its end that river goes,
Shrinking beneath the sun's Medusa spell,
To desert lands where mortal may not dwell,
Like a lost life that evil ones compel,
Drugged to destruction through its own repose,—
Till the clutching cruel sands around it close.

THE TRAVELLER

LONG ages since upon the planet Earth,
Was his unconscious pilgrimage begun
At roseate rising of the hill-top sun.
A traveller from the moment of his birth
He hailed no inn nor hospitable hearth
To rest him ere his journey's end was won;
And when the ways of earth he had outrun
He knew not what his journey's end was worth.
Now as he travels on from sphere to sphere,
Before, behind him, in perspective dim,
The long road lies to meet the horizon's rim;
But still his journey's end is no more near
Than at that first sun-dawning, roseate clear,
Long ages since when God's hand beckoned him.

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

WHITE NIGHTS
(In a Swiss Hospital)

MY House of Pain stands high upon a hill
Where mountain splendours all the prospect fill;
I, shut within, command them at my will,
Yet often I forget their sky-flung line,
Hearing a little moan that is not mine
And the quick feet of nurses for responsive fine.

*(At eve to-day the blackbird sang without;
He saw the glory of the Alps, no doubt,
—The silver heights, the snowy uplands long,—
And turned their eloquent radiance into song.)
Oh, mirth, mirth, mirth, come, live with me!
Oh, love, oh, life, oh, ecstasy!*

Motionless as the stilled heart of the storm
All night I watch my window gather form,
Thinking that these same hours may waft away
Sweet souls of little babes born yesterday,

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

While he my neighbour on his torture-wheel
Begs for the mercy of the exquisite steel
And all night as we lie in chambers walled apart
His fierce inexorable stare strangles my heart.

*(To-morrow when at last from dark blooms day
What will my careless blackbird have to say?)*

Now is the threshold between night and morn,
When souls meet on the stairs, the dead, the newly
born;

The Grey Hour, close enfolding fears and immortal
things.

(I, that am sick, have listened to the sweeping of her
wings.)

The dark has flowed to dusk, the dusk has ebbed and
gone;

A burning amber is the wild March dawn.

What of the night beyond my chamber door?

What troubled eyes have closed to wake no more?

Prisoner of pain I lie, watched, silent, bound,

Yet my swift fearful thoughts follow each ghostly
sound

And faintly spell somewhere the muted tread
Of those who lift the calm unknowing dead.

PART TWO: FUGITIVES

*(Look! one high mountain in that far Savoy
Is smitten with the sun's red Sword of Joy.)*
Wake and give thanks, ye women of the ward,
By whose racked bodies vulture death keeps guard.
O narrow beds, O looks all meekly turned,
White faces and the great eyes that have learned,
Have ye not seen how tall the beacon burned?

*Listen, my comrades, to yon outland flute,
Our punctual blackbird's jubilant salute.
He sees the distant morning touch that height
And sings, exulting in the Lord of light.
Oh, mirth, mirth, mirth, come, live with me!
Oh, love, oh, life, oh, ecstasy!*

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

THE CLOUD AND THE MOUNTAIN

TWO sister Whitenesses lay along the sky,
Immortal bubbles stiller than a sigh,
White domes of dreams immeasurably high.

The Cloud spake to the Mountain and it said:
“Lo! I am still as thou and lift a hoary head,
Men marvel at my height and are adread.

“My promontory rides the blue, a gallant prow;
My valleys they are deep, the sunset smites my brow.
I draw men’s eyes with distance, even as thou.”

The ancient Mountain spake: “Ephemeral and vain,
This evening thou shalt vanish never to come again,
A shape, a fleet similitude, built out of rain.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

“ No flocks of sheep or goats follow thy phantom
trails;

There are no folk inhabiting thy misty vales;
Thine insubstantial headland, lo, it faints and fails.

“ Thou art a dream, a shadow, and a lure,
A ghostly mountain and a haunted moor
Where thin thoughts move but nothing can endure.”

The Cloud spake to the Mountain: “ Even so
It is with thee and thy perpetual snow;
Thou art a dream that insect generations know.

“ The men that build their cities upon thee
Are dimmer than the Shapes that people me,
Figments of flesh and soon no more to be.

“ Ages before thou wast conceived, I AM,
Before the earth took shape or harboured man,
When the chained stars like molten rivers ran.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

“ The frailest little thought that climbs my stair
It shall outlive the rock of thy despair,
Clothed with the stars when thou art empty air.

“ For as I am a fable in thy sight,
Art thou and all things, save the still small light
Of candled souls that journey home by night.”

TO HARRIET

H. B. L.

DEAR HARRIET, we saw you go
Blithe and alone,
Like some tall nymph against a curved
sky-line,
Stepping wind-blown,
Gallant in your virginity,
Adventurous and free.

The flutes of morning sang for you,
The snows allured.
Oh, the far visions of those rose-white peaks
Floating unmoored!
Dear Harriet, why hesitate,
You, the wild wind's playmate?

You heard a stranger voice that called.
Strange yet remembered

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

In dim prenatal chambers of your life.
As fascinated wild things lift the head
We saw you pause in startled silhouette,
Fearing the call, yet listening, Harriet.

The scarlet hills you love are touched with frost,
The headlands are like ships.
Thither! before the dream-dew flash is dulled,
Nor heed those wistful lips.
He calls you from the land without a name,
To the old Tents, the Distaff and the Flame.

In dim prenatal chambers of your life
Through each unquickened spring,
In that enchanted sleep wherein you lay
The Flame was king.
The blossoming fire that rules the races yet,
Has drawn you home, Valkyrie Harriet.

BEFORE THE DAWN

HOW grey the garden was before the dawn,
And after that sad wraith of moon had set,
When hand in hand within the door that let
On Fairyland, no doubt, we stood withdrawn
And watched the fading stars before the dawn;
Tiptoe we trod between the lilies wet
To where the peonies and the parsley met,—
Where were the fays that dance upon the lawn?
Hoar mourning-bride with close-fringed eyes of blue
Trembled along each blade with beaded dew,
And harboured by a drooping balsam cup
A folded moth like drowsy reveller
Beside his wine, made inarticulate stir,
Dreaming perhaps of some diviner sup.

“ This is the fairy time before the dawn,
When every bud is full of mystery,
And,—hark! I think I hear a melody
Of little pipes come down the pearly lawn

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

Where garden elves their gossamer rings have
drawn."

(Ah, the dim twilight-time's grave ecstasy!)
Look, in this twisted flower what tenantry
Fluttering within to vanish with the dawn."
(Ah, the shut lilies' pale tranquillity!)

"Only its satin plaitings to untwirl,
Then hold within my hand a fairy girl!"
Do you remember how you laughed in glee
As from the morning-glory's opened whorl
Tumbled a boozy belted bumble-bee?

TO A WOOD PATH

WHO found you first,
Wild wood thing,
Womanly, wayward,
Wandering?

In remote ages,
Scored by the million
Once there slept here
A winged reptilian,
The print of his body
Inscribed for your reason,
As he dreamed in his coilings
A cycle or season.

Up sprang the forest
Through ages succeeding;
Stalked the wolves one by one,
The grey wolf leading.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

Then in the spring-time,
 Boughs interlacing,
The doe and her fawn
 Went tenderly pacing.

Here you flit, there you flit,
 Teasingly distant,
Vanishing ever,
 Ever persistent,
Beckoning us on,
 Last born of the million,
To walk in the print
 Of that dreaming reptilian.

Where the wolves quested,
 Savage and meagre,
We are love's pensioners,
 With hearts that are eager.
Whither the path leads,
 Dear, little matter;—
Amber of spring hole,
 Waterfall's chatter;
You are my goal, dear,
 Wild wood thing,
Womanly, wayward,
 Wandering.

THE LAMP OF THE GENII

AT evening when my Unadilla hills grow mellow
And lose themselves against the sky's pale infinite
yellow,
Far down the dwindling river-reach, the silvered
alley,
On the dim ranges high across the brooding valley,

Shineth a little light, on all the hills one only,
Calleth me like a voice, wayfaring, clear and lonely,
That fain would find a comrade: "Good neighbour,
art a-bed?
I haste to cheer and comfort the visions of thy
head."

Perhaps one sits within the glow of that far-lighted
candle.
A book, and bread and cheese, a babe to toss and
dandle;

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

Warm in the ruddy mantle of fireside graciousness,
Yet witless of the wider beam, the lordlier spacious-
ness;
How the wild Genius of the Lamp, across the ranges
fleeting,
Knocks nightly at a stranger door and heartens me
with greeting.

Clothed as a pilgrim star He comes and proffers me
his beaker,
With dreams and glories for strong drink to satisfy
the seeker.
My soul is winged away 'twixt clouds of starry
faces
To all immortal thresholds of all delights and
places.

While he, the master of that house, my far unknow-
ing neighbour,
He sits and nods beside the lamp and rests him after
labour:
For him the globe, the oil, the circle on the ceiling,
The kiss upon his cheek, the homely shadows
reeling,

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

But mine, the Trail of Wonder that is to him
denied,
The Trail across the valley where Shapes go side by
side;
The beauty of their footfall blossoms as a blossom-
ing rod
And the measure of their stature is the fulness of
a god.

THE BORDERLAND

THE darkness trembles like a rising tide
On day's pale verge,
With myriad filmy voices floating wide
On the spent surge.

The creeping line laps up the futile land,
The strong, smooth sea,
As on some heart, lies like a quiet hand
Hushing its glee.

VAGRANTS

NOW'S the time to be abroad
Singing, troubadouring,
When the wind calls from the south,
And the maple buds are luring.

Every yeoman's blood runs blither,
With the greensward for his footing,
And the gypsies take the road
When the pipes of May are fluting.

Let us forth then to the hedgerows,
Following where the Blue-Flag leads us,
For our kingdom is the Outland,
And the mead-cup brims to speed us.

We will lodge us for our slumber
At the Sign of the Wild Cherry,
Scrip nor staff to burden us
But the heart to make us merry.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

Day by day the trail to travel,
Vagrants careless of indenture,
Lords of all the world at sunrise,
Open-hearted for adventure.

So, love, our last steps may lead us
To the dreaming sunset yonder,
Where abide all fairy fond ones,
Souls of those who love to wander.

LOW TIDE

WINGÈD flare of an autumn sunset
Over the long, low opposite island,
Hills of loneliness and silence.
Desolate wide rock-flung bottoms,
Corrugated glistening bottoms
Naked left by the sea's withdrawal.
Occasional sea-pools glowing warily,
Placid circular looking-glasses
Set like gems in the rugged beaches.
Copper tints of the failing sunset
Painting the crescent lapping shallows
With burnished hues of mineral brightness.
Streaks of flame on the umber edges,
Cliffs and caverns of the coast-line.
Far beyond, the lavender ocean,

Lavender, infinite, melting to heaven.
A fishing-boat that floats at anchor,
Silhouette on the sky's clear colour,
Swaying upon its slender drag-pole,
Downward trembling in blots of reflection.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

The first lisp of the tide returning,
Significant as birth or spring-time;
Terrible omen, tender promise
Of things inevitable, resistless.
Far-off travelling single sea-bird,
Sculptured an evanescent instant,
Dipped to the sunset's molten centre,
Sunk in the sunset's golden mystery.

WAKING SONG
(After the Provençal)

FRESH the dawn is breaking,
 Purple grows the sky.
Orchard-birds are waking,
Meadow-grasses shaking
 Dewy banners dry.
Which, pray, think you is the sweetest,
Day that lingers or night that is fleetest?

All the silver night,
 All the night of May,
Apple-blossoms bright,
Drifted clear and white
 In the moonbeams lay.
Which, pray, think you is the sweetest,
Day that lingers or night that is fleetest?

Wan the wind-flowers wait,
 Petals opal-tinted,—

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

At the Orient gate
Comes their king in state;
 Gold his auguries glinted.
Which, pray, think you is the sweetest,
Day that lingers or night that is fleetest?

TENSION

THE night was round and dark and still
And hollow as a sphere,
Belted with iron memories,
Bolted with bars of fear.

The loud hush beat upon my face,
The blackness reeled and sang,
When from an outer undreamed place
A sudden bird-note sprang.

All in the middle of the night,
Hollow and grim,—but hark!
That blissful note unbound my throat,
Unwound the tightening dark.

A chaffinch dreaming in her sleep
Of purple thistle balm,
Released the spell of silence fell;
The night grew wide and calm.

WATER-FOWL IN THE FOG

THEY sit upon the mist-banks
Veiled as mythology,
Or starry creatures on the scrolls
Of large astrology.

Like pearly notes of music
They pulse through spectral pages,
As in fantastic miracles
Of Fuji-yama's mages.

An ivory rilievo,
The half-glimpsed inspiration
Of some archaic chiseler's
Untamed imagination.

Or a Chaldean vision
Of white-plumed sacred dancers
Revealed at templ'd Abydos
By cloudy necromancers.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

On some lost lake of Hades
This is thy dream, Leander!
White breasts that float and vanish,
Snow-pale and hyacinth-tender.

The billowing mist upbears them,
Drowned breasts that melt and wander.
On some lost lake of Hades
This is thy dream, Leander!

WOUNDED

LET her creep to earth again, my children,
She will never heed our signal calls.
Do not whine along her track,
She will not come footing back.
She is wounded to the heart of her, my children,
And the warm blood follows where she falls.

Let her be, forget her steps, my children,
Yea, forget the anguish and the length;
Let her find a covert place,
There to hide her glazing face,
And to stretch her grievous paws in silence, children,
Dripping, drop by drop, her scarlet strength.

She will dread the common trail, my children,
Crouching where the deepest shade is cast.
Creatures of the earth and sky,
None can comfort when we die,

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

Only dark and unremembering, my children,
For we feel the Hour is come at last.

She will creep, wet foot and slow, my children;
She will never heed the signal call;
She will voiceless be and blind
To her kin and to her kind,
Waiting in the shadow, O my children,
Wounded, for that is the End of all.

THE GREBE

OUT in the Northern night
Under the star-lit sky,
What creature in affright
Utters that dreary cry?
A-leu-leu-lo, by the lonesome river,
All the long night through in the reeds by the river.

Is it a little child,
Lost once, lost evermore,
Whose cry, so eerie-wild,
We hear along the shore?
A-leu-leu-lo, by the lonesome river,
All the long night through in the reeds by the river.

Is it some god alone
A thousand years or so,
Calling in dolorous tone
The nymphs he used to know?

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

A-leu-leu-lo, by the lonesome river,
All the long night through in the reeds by the river.

Is it a wandering ghost
 Grieving for some grey crime,
Who haunts our quiet coast
 From immemorial time?
A-leu-leu-lo, by the lonesome river,
All the long night through in the reeds by the river.

THE HEART OF THE WOODS

I LIKE the leafy-murmuring solemn hush
Of woods that wall me round with underbrush.

Their intricate tapestry of twinkling green
Glinted with sunlight, the grey trunks between,

And the thick-woven carpet, chequered brown,
Dead leaves from many an autumn, matted down;

Remote from all things, sun and wind and sky,
Far, far above my head the tree-tops sigh,

And like the echo of a distant land
I hear the great lake wash upon its strand.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

So maiden calm, so silent, serious,
'Tis someone's heart, in mood mysterious,

The depths profoundest of an untouched heart
From pain and passion very far apart,

Untravelled and unknown, a land enchanted,
Wild, labyrinthine, dim and fancy-haunted.

PURPLE CROCUSES IN THE VAL
BREGAGLIA

YOU dear dim flowers of the spring
Purpling this autumn valley
Like singing thoughts that come in dreams
You flutter musically.

The quick and water-loving bird,
A winged mote, darkly dances
Where Marcio's mist-blown cataract
Has carved its wayward fancies.

Dazzling Bondasca lifts sky-high
Her white unflinching splendour
Above your little laughing tribes,
Undaunted, brief and tender.

On wild Bregaglia's rugged slopes
A blossoming miracle,
You kiss the shore by Maira's roar
In silence lyrical.

RONDELS

I.

THE EAST

A BIRD upon a budding wild-rose branch,
Dawn breaking o'er the hills,
And music rippling from sequestered rills.

Maiden-wise doth the Orient bloom and blanch,
Till, ah! alack-a-day!
Rushed forth a cloud across the bridegroom's way.

Vainly the East a passing shower forecast
On purple peak and plain
Nemesis-like fell the tumultuous rain.

O, lost at morn, the sun came not at last
Aflame along her path.
Rosily reaped the West her sister's aftermath.
Even so it is, I cried, O Life! O Love!

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

II.

THE BIRD

A bird upon a budding wild-rose branch,
Dawn breaking o'er the hills,
And music rippling from sequestered rills.

Maiden-wise doth the Orient bloom and blanch,
And to the sweet-briar spray
Rings out a later bird his amorous lay.

In all the morning's dewy splendour bright,
And sunny afternoon,
Never was wild-rose deluged more with tune.

O, wearied with the long day's ceaseless light,
At eve she fell asleep,
Red petals pale, and no one came to weep.
Even so it is, I said, O Life! O Love!

SERMONS IN TREES

THE purple of early November
Lies like a dream on the hill;
In this basking hollow of woodland
The berry-vines glitter and thrill,
And a maple is hushed to remember
Trancèd days of quiet September,
And the gold that she used to spill.

My feet through the wood-path bearing
Are an alien noise in the dale,
Stirring to wings of terror
A partridge or two from the trail;
So with my uncourteous daring
I have hindered their leisurely faring,
The pretty brown birds of the dale.
I am humbled and full of repentance
For my race's enmity,

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

That these gentle-eyed wood-creatures
Should whirl from their hostelry;
And I fain would make their acquaintance
That they should reverse the sentence
And not be afraid of me.

A tawny squirrel comes whisking
Around the bole of a tree,
With his bright shy look untroubled
And his tail a-quiver with glee;
I am glad of his billowy risking,
The trustful heart of his frisking;
And I thank my brother the squirrel,
For his friendliness to me.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

SEA-BLOOD

AN INLAND CHILD'S INHERITANCE

*Why did you stir, little brother,
At middle of the night?*
There was a knell of the great sea-bell,
A flash of the lighthouse light.

(From a distant tower the hour tolled clear,
And far below in the valley shook the torch
of a mountainer.)

*Why did you rise, little brother,
So long before the dawn?*
I heard the wail of a sinking ship,
The cry of a sailor's horn.

(The hills returned a panther's whine,
And underneath the sharp green stars creakled
a frozen pine.)

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

*What did you see, little brother,
At dawn on the mountain bleak?*
I saw the white of a tossing sea,
Noiseless from peak to peak.

(Before the sun's first fiery leap
He saw the frightened mists of morning
down the valley sweep.)

*Where have you been, little brother,
This eager afternoon?*
I went to the heart of a naked wood,
With the lost and ragged moon;

The sun in my face made a blinding mist,
The branches gleamed like spray;
I heard the sob of a mighty surge
A million miles away.

*Why do you ride, little brother,
All day in your willow swing?*
I feel the shiver of boom and spar
And I hear the top-sail sing;

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

I shout with joy, "Land, land, ahoy!"
The helmsman cries, "Hip, hip!"
Through the soapy swale of plunging foam
I rock with the rocking ship.

*Why do you stand, little brother,
At sunset by the pane?
Beneath that fringe of dreadful firs
I see a golden main;*

There are no shores on either side,
For God hath set no bond,
But still it lies, how still it lies,
And stretches far Beyond.

*(Those infinite leagues of silent foam
In the uncharted golden west
Where only phantom ships may roam,
Beat through the sea-blood of this child and
draw him home,
Home to the deep sea's fathering breast.)*

THE CALL OF SPRING

I HEARKENED at dawn to the call of the Spring,
The voice of a spirit,
And my soul leapt up like a wild-wood thing,
Like a hawk from its tirret.

She is calling me out to the open wold,
To the scurrying hollow,
To the violets dim in the dead-leaf gold,
Where the white-wings follow.

All the blue April pools are a-dance and alive
With thrips and with midges,
Dumb shimmering mites that equally thrive
As the merle on the ridges.

The merle sits a-tilt on the rotten-wood rail,
Blithe heart for his booting,
Toling me out to the gypsy trail,
With his mocado fluting.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

The merryman Wind I will have for my mate,
On the moorland reeling,
And a journeying shadow when day is late,
With a cloud for my shieling.

The Stars overhead will lamp me to bed,
A pilgrim unladen;
The wayfaring Tree my guild-brother will be
And the Lark my glee-maiden.

THE GLACIER

I AM the mother of rivers
And out of my bosom of snow,
Restless, tormented and leaping,
My passionate children go.

They spring from the deathly Silence
Of a white and passionless life,
Yet far below in the valleys
Is the rumour of their strife.

They gnash their teeth in the darkness
Of the dolomitic gorge;
They plunge from the porphyry precipice
Like a thunder-driven forge.

I sit unattainably splendid,
Folded from peak to peak.
O thou last-born of my bosom,
What goest thou forth to seek?

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

I am white as the whiteness of dawning;
I lift a perpetual brow,
A frozen and pitiless beauty,
Yet once I was driven as thou.

I mounted to crests of anguish;
I sank to the cruel crevasse;
Yet even from this is calmness,
And lo! it has come to pass.

I was sculptured mid-sea of my passion
Millions of ages ago.
My lips are locked: I am speechless,
But I know, my child, I know.

THE HOUSE OF GREAT CONTENT

THERE is a certain gracious garth I know,
Unwrought by human hand,
Most like a faery garden in a book
Whereon no mortal man may ever look,—
This lovely croft of land.

Not far away the sober highway creeps,
The pleasaunce witting not;
Its calm of mountain curves in pure embrace,
Blue-windowed into realms of heavenly space
About the joyful plot.

A fair green meadow in a river bend
By silver willows crowned;
A sweep of hill-side like a gallant wall,
And, lone upon its ledge, a pine-tree tall
Guards this enchanted ground.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

It hath a spring bordered divinely blue
 With water-loving flowers;
A tender isle that fringed with alder is,
Where fireflies weave their silent symphonies,
 Spangling the twilight hours.

So cunningly within the hills 'tis set
 In happy youth apart,
It seems beyond the ken of toil and time,
Lisping the little river's intimate rhyme
 Deep in its lyric heart.

Belovèd, let the unknowing world go by
 In futile wonderment,
While, some rich day, there builds for you and me
Between the willows and the plumèd tree
 A house of great content.

THE FAR COUNTRY

THE tale of life is heavy
 Upon the city street,
But dreaming I go ever
 To a far land and sweet.

By day, the bondman's harness,
 The townling's restless brain;
By night, a breezy upland,
 A tansy-bordered lane.

The earth, new-born at sunrise,
 The meadow, smoking mist;
The river bathed in purple,
 The distance amethyst.

Behind the druid pine-tree
 The great sun journeys up;
He lifts the clouds and opens
 The briar rose's cup.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

The fox grapes in the boskage,
Green-panoplied and cool,
The eager cardinal flower's
Shy scarlet straight flammule;

Along the bounteous hillside,
The round sun at their back,
The fronded flaming sumacs,
The elder thickets black,—

These are my dream companions;
Forgot and far behind
Are play and tinsel novel,
The culture-maddened mind.

Or 'tis a white May morning,
Bloom-drifted orchard floors,
In his green oratory
A mystic thrush adores.

Sometimes the calm of sunset
Poured like a golden wine,
And spacious streaming shadows
And solitude divine.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

Or in the eldritch twilight
 With tree shapes dimly spelt,
Faint odours float and vanish,
 Stray fireflies gleam and melt.

Day is a lamp-lit country
 Glimpsed through the window square,
Where vague, unsteady, houseless
 Things hover in mid-air.

And I, a loitering shadow,
 With other shadows dwell,
Twirling like string-tied puppet
 In aimless tinternel.

Night is the freeman's country
 Wherein my soul, unshod,
Her thatch-cloak loosed about her,
 Lays bare her breast to God.

INDIAN SUMMER

WHAT splendid ways
These russet days
We roam and roam together:
Leaving behind the heavy, blind
Turmoil of town, with lightsome mind
Through wood and dale
We seek the trail
Of scarlet autumn weather.

The zigzag fence,
The common-sense
Of the squirrel's witty chir;
The vanishing tread of the wood leaves
dead;
The torch of the maple beckoning red
By hill and hollow
As we follow
The falling chestnut burr.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

On upland higher,
A fringe of fire,
The sumacs take the breeze.
Clematis white is winged for flight,
Fox grapes wait for the touch of night;
Apples drop
From the orchard's top
And the frost creeps under the trees.

Perhaps more slow
We choose to go
Than they who walk alone,
While on the wold the ruined gold
Rustles a music manifold;
But onward yet
Our feet are set
For a charmèd place our own.

So, pacing faster,
We watch the aster
Its frosted purples fling
By wayside wall, and over all
The woodbine weave its Indian shawl:
Then by the stile
In kingly file
Our goldenrods upspring.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

With welcome sweet
That sunburned seat
Allures us to delay,
A green philosophy to rehearse,
A tale, a golden book of verse,
Till other lore
Compels us more
And lips will have their way.

Cathedral shades
The solemn glades
Draw down on our returning;
Frosty and chill each lonely hill,—
But Love, light-footed, leads us still
Where down the road
To His abode,
The orange west is burning.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

THE SOUL OF THE GOLDENROD

I AM the soul of a girl, winged, splendid and tall,
Alert for the autumn's delectable days when I rise to
answer the Call,

To drink the faint wine of the frost, to spread the
gold furze of my hair,
On the lonely hill with the shadows of clouds and the
pine-tree pilgrims to fare,

From the milk-white sea of dawning, the breathless
colourless time
Beneath the rim of the rose-red sun when the valleys
drift with rime,

To the milk-white sea of evening, the edge of the world
on fire,
When the mist sweeps up and the moon swims down,
an untranslated desire.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

They buried me years ago where the grave-stones look
 aghost;
I was never asleep at all, but a captive freed at last:

Free from unsatisfied hunger to walk with the wistful
 things,
Moths and lizards and forest paths, twilights and hid-
 den springs.

Free from the deafness and blindness whereto I was
 born and reared,
Free to be silent and simple, unafraid and wholly un-
 feared.

It was good to mix my soul with the darkling soul of
 the sod,
For the bosom of earth is the bosom of knowledge, is
 Understanding, is God.

It is better to spring from the soil, to be parcel of eve
 and of morn,
To burst the seed, to unfurl the flower and a plummy
 fruit to be borne

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

A hundred ways with the winds on their yeoman in-
visible range,
Stirred with sentience immortal through rich elemen-
tal change;

This is eternal expression, the ultimate noble speech,
Dimmer and freer and larger than human lips may
reach.

I am come to my own again, to the heritage of my
race;
Created and master-creator I lift a transfigured face,

Sister to wayside stones, and to asters on the hill,
I, the soul of a girl, immortal and golden still.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

THE SONG OF THE SAW-MILL

Borne in the womb of the forest, lapped in the quiet
eternal,
Lay they and ripened for me.
Thrilled with the tremble of birth-joy, breaking the
soil maternal,
Budded and bourgeoned for me.

Centuries long in the silence of mountains austere they
flourished,
Soaring to plume and shaft,
Battled by bugling tempests, by rain-time and sun-
time nourished;
I, in my hunger, laughed.

*Balsam and fir and spruce,
Tamarack, cedar and pine,
By skidway and chute and sluice,
Mine are they, mine and mine.*

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

Peach-coloured dawning and lilac of shadow, dazzle
of nooning,
Whipped to a froth of snow,
Piping of horns in the frost-stiffened branches or
lullaby crooning,
I will sing to you so,

Over and over aloud, the tale of the years abounding,
Tiptoe of squirrel and hare,
White-tailed twinkle of yearling fawns, woodpeckers'
pounding,
Lope of the fox to his lair;

All the intricate melody deep in your bosom cherished,
Footfall of snow and rain,
Inarticulate whisper of beech-leaves, secrets that
perished,
Live they anew in my strain:

*Vast and unresting my shriek,
Insistent, sibilant, grim.
While the endless pulleys creak
I whirl to a swiftness dim;*

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

*Blurred to a motionless speed,
Centre and jagged rim,
Stirred to a splendid greed,
Singing my terrible rede,
I whirl to a swiftness dim.*

Sweeping and leaping of winds in your branches, the
fierce revelation,
Of lightning's Damascus blade,
Cooing and wooing of doves in your branches, the
sweet invitation
Of April-eyed things unafraid;

Dripping of spring-time, autumn a-whipping the hills
with her broomstick yellow,
Partridges' lonely tattoo,
Meteors startling an August midnight, moon of the
hunter, mellow,
These I remember for you;

Many a sigh of forgotten summer, needless that
scatter,
Petals of wax on the trail,
Breath of the twin-flower, stripe of the sorrel, maiden-
hair's tatter,
Pyrola spirit-pale;

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

Many a pearly pattern of winter, sparkle and tingle
Under the Pleiades dim,
Burst of the frost like ghostly artillery,—these I will
mingle
Into my ultimate hymn.

*Balsam and fir and spruce,
Tamarack, cedar and pine,
By skidway and chute and sluice,
Mine are they, mine and mine.*

Sledged or snaked, with icicles caked or foamily flaked
From the drives of the river they scurry,
Mill-race and flume in a fury of spume and drunk with
the doom
That is leashed to the law of their hurry.

In from the dam with the clambering jack, pine and
hemlock and cedar,
Hither their footsteps bend,
Belt whizzing white with the engine's might and the
roar of the giants that feed her,
This the importunate end!

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

Clutched from the calmness of daylight into my pal-
pitant riot
Upward and up they are ground
Till to one moment intense I condense generations of
simmering quiet,
Fused in a sword-flash of sound

*Vast and unresting my shriek,
Insistent, sibilant, grim,
While the endless pulleys creak
I whirl to a swiftiness dim;
Blurred to a motionless speed,
Centre and jagged rim,
Stirred to a splendid greed,
Singing my terrible rede,
I whirl to a swiftiness dim.*

Piston and lever and rod, with the steam-wreaths
round them melting,
Duly their task fulfil;
Quick in the round of obedience, pulley and shaft and
belting
Leap to the law of the mill.

I am the Word and the Law, unpitying, final, terrific,
Cleaving them through and through;

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

I am the Word and the Law, joyful, supreme, vivific,
Heralding birth anew.

Memory am I to them as I spin through the heart of
their being,
Memory and Prophecy,
Singing aloud in their ear the song of the years that
are fleeing,
Shouting the years to be.

Measures unknown I am mixing for them, the tumult
of people,
Sway of the sea-going deck,
Swirl of light women whirling to music, chime of the
steeple,
Wail of the blackened wreck;

Shuffle of gamesters, scuffle of shoppers, chatter and
clatter,
Walking of them that grieve,
Swinging of bridges and singing of railways, feet of
children a-patter,
These, prophetic, I weave.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

*Vast and unresting my shriek,
Insistent, sibilant, grim,
While the endless pulleys creak
I whirl to a swiftmess dim;
Blurred to a motionless speed,
Centre and jagged rim,
Stirred to a splendid greed,
Singing my terrible rede,
I whirl to a swiftmess dim.*

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

AT DEAD OF NIGHT

AT dead of night when the great winds fight
Titanic war
In the heavens afar,
When the stars gleam and glance like spear-point and
lance
In the sky's black expanse,
When I hear the witch-leaves in the eddying dance,
And a skeleton knuckle my window is knocking
With a ghoulish tap-tap—'tis the woodbine a-rock-
ing.—

At dead of night when the great winds fight,
I hear the light tread
Of shades of the dead,—
Faces dim at the pane that gather and strain,
A shadowy train,
That peer, disappear like mists of the rain,
And I know them, the ghosts of the gay and the brave,
Awaked from their grave by the wind and the wave.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

At dead of night when the great winds fight,
 They summon me forth
 The south winds and north.
There's a banner flung out and a bold battle-shout;
 'Tis a right royal rout,
And Paladin Roland at head of the bout.
There's the clangour of armour, the twang of the
 bow,—
Charlemagne and the foe at renowned Roncevaux.

At dead of night when the great winds fight,
 List! for I hear,
 Borne in on my ear,
Swift horses that fly like the wind rushing by
 And the Bedouin cry
Of Blest be Mahomet and Allah on high!
And the Syrian scimitar flashes blue
In the hand of the prophet Al Amin the true.

At dead of night when the great winds fight,
 Ho! the Viking
 In his vessel a-wing
From main-yard and mast o'er the sea flying fast
 And the boreal blast
Booming from icebergs glittering vast—
Oh, the visions, the voices, the vanishing crowd,
That people the night when the winds blow loud.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

AFTER THE LONG RAIN

THE dark remembering woods within themselves
were crying,
 The reminiscent trees;
Thin woof of cloud across the moon's prow flying;
The river-meadows in the dimness lying,
 Most mystical of seas.

The meadows, mile on mile, unharvested white places,
Were lapped in leagues of dusk for unimagined spaces
And snowed upon with level drifts of still and wake-
 ful daisies.

Motionless, soundless, vague, all night they waked
 and whitened.
In their foamy-faëry depths pale phosphor swam and
 brightened
And with some smouldering memory a cloud-edge
 burned and lightened.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

All night the moon's wreck drove, the meadows lay
unsleeping.

Like phantom headlights firefly barks flew leaping.

All night the dark and reminiscent woods were
weeping.

THE WOOD-SPELL

DEEP in a dappled forest where the linden-trees
grow tall,
Where the beeches spread out greenly and the brown
leaves carpet all;

Where the ferns from their dewy ledges drip over an
amber pool,
And one pale violet lingers alone in the dusk and cool;

Where the splash of wind in the branches is the sound
of a surge far away
But below like the heart of the ocean is stillness un-
broken alway;

Where the sunlight flickers dimly,—ay, dim as
dreamed-of bliss,—
There in that emerald twilight rode Lady Blanchelys.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

Green like the leaves was her kirtle and her eyes, like
the water, brown
And clear with glintings of amber, and like sunshine
her hair fell down.

Faintly the Angelus sounded out of the streaming
west,
The wistful voice of a mother calling her children to
rest.

But Blanchelys in the forest, from holy chapelle far,
Listed the *sursum corda* of leaf and wind and star.

From her palfrey white she lighted when the fearsome
shadows fell
And in that whispering hollow she wove her a wood-
spell.

MIDGET-SPELL

Little pipers of morasses
Wide;
Little fluters of the grasses
Pied;

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

Tiny tenants of tree-tunnels

Dim,

Or with freehold by a runnel's

Rim;

Scarlet spiders by a kind weed

Hid;

Blue-green beetles in the bindweed

Slid;

Shrill hylodes with your tinging,

Thin,

Distant, doleful, lonely-ringing

Din;

Moon-white moths that, paired like lovers,

Stray

In some garth as twilight hovers

Grey.

All ye bodiless voices, wavering

Mere

Pulse of darkness, quivering, quavering;

Clear,

Filmy creatures,—flitting, creeping;—

Ward

Peril from me, all my sleeping

Guard.

Rustled the tall woods wisely; courteous they were and
fain,

Yet by their sunset margin Sir Malincour drew rein.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

On an evil mission came he, black-browed Sir Malin-
cour,
To steal a bride unwilling by most ungentle lure.

A little passage threaded the broken boughs between,
Where the slim ashes scattered their brushwood, glit-
tering-green.

The long low radiance vanished, twitter of insects
hushed,
As down the dark cathedral of forest aisles he
brushed:

Still, by the massy oak-tree, like saint within a shrine
Of some grey, hill-top, pilgrim church, broidered with
vine

And thatched with aged mosses, whither the poor folk
fare
All day up the steep steps, rough-hewn, to offer prayer

Before Saint Luce who folds her hands, listening
through stony years
While lace-like ferns lean over her and the small hare-
bell cheers,—

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

So, still as statued virtue, the lady in the wood
Weaving her wood-spell rightly, against the tree-trunk
stood.

FLOWER-SPELL

Night-flowers, hark,
On woodland marge,
In the frail dark,
Wistful and large:

Pale primrose cup
Where rose-winged sheen
Grave moths may sup
And flit unseen;

Lush jewel-weed
Beaded with dew;
Faint thistle seed,
Globose and blue;

You tremulous small
Gauze-petalled guild,
By shy dew-fall
And star-shine thrilled,—

Watchers of night;—
List to my spell:
Till flushing light
O guard me well!

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

Three bow-shots from his charger, where the dusky
pathway went,
Was Blanchelys, wood-maiden, and the leaves about
her bent.

If Malincour but find her and wreak his purpose
fell,—
Woe worth the day for Blanchelys; now, wood-things,
guard her well!

The first small star blinked timidly in the trembling
olive sky,
And in the hollow quiet he heard a lady sigh.

Green were the blossoming wild-grapes; faint was
their spicy tang;
Across the trail their wiry festooning tendrils sprang.

The knight in his malfeasance had won a dark re-
nown
But underfoot tendril and root pulled horse and rider
down.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

And now the third strand weaveth she, with virginal
grave calm,
On the sky's marge the star grew large, the evening
air shed balm:

WIND-SPELL

Night-wind that roisterest to and fro,
By shuttered thorpe and marish low;

And to and fro on keening quest
From veiled east to star-sown west;

Night-wind that wanderest up and down,
Vagrant of time and outland clow;

Wild rider blowing your grey horn
For Hunt's-up in dim hours of morn,

And still at blood-red close of day
Loud-shouting,—Harrow-and-away;

Night-wind, O list thee to my spell
And all the long night guard me well.

Far from the trail he wandered, Sir Malincour, that
night,
Led by a thousand fantasies torturing his sight.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

The wood waxed dark and darker, but through the
dark there gleamed
Beside some trunk a brightness of gold hair, as he
deemed;

Nought but the ghostly glimmer of beech-bole long
decayed
And waxen toad-stools' mockery of hands in slumber
laid.

The sighing wind misled him; an aimless pyralid
With weak white wings affronted him the forest
glooms amid.

Shadow-pursuing ever, he wandered the night long,
Pursued by shadows ever. The wood-spell waxed
strong.

But Blanchelys, sweet lady, who loved the wood-things
well,
Took comfort of their friendliness, murmuring her
spell.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

STAR-SPELL

All the hollow dark of sky
Is yearning down with stars,
Faint as rosy-striped spring flowers
When April leaps the bars.

All the bourneless vague of sky
Is palpitant with lamps,
Gypsy lamps of light-foot tribes
In golden careless camps.

Sirius, Aldebaran,
Pale Watcher of the Pole;
Violet-crowned Olympians,
Stript for the Utter Goal;

Ye my fellows, bright-heart palmers,
Algol, Algebar;
Ye who fare the mighty road
Where God and Silence are;

Mica-dust of million feet
Upon the threshold dim;
Interstellar milky blush
And undreamed Thoughts of Him;

Build about me for my chamber
In the House of Night
Jacinth walls of purple silence,
Windows chrysolite

Where a large low star may enter;—
Lucent floor of sard;
Ceiling open to the Pleiads;—
Thus my slumber guard.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

The broad night wrapped her to its heart as a mother
folds her child

In a deep embrace and silent; and the little wood-
things wild

Called her sister and loved her, shy hearts that watch
and wake,

God's darkling pensioners of flower and mould and
brake.

In the lap of the lonely forest where a hundred mys-
teries creep

As in her own soft chamber, lay Blanchelys asleep.

.

At midnight through the forest rode at the king's be-
hest,

Sore weary with long faring, the brave knight Dorin-
crest.

There where the moonlight faltered, one solitary beam,
Upcurvèd like a lily, he saw a white hand gleam.

Full softly he alighted, the brave knight Dorincrest,
And lo, beneath the oak-tree a lady lay at rest.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

Black lashes swept her paleness like fringe of flowers
rare;
Flowed on her lovely bosom the glory of her hair.

Upon his spear he rested and could not gaze his fill;
“In sooth, so fair a vision,” he thought, “can work
no ill.”

“Would I might win, dear Heaven, from such sweet
lips a kiss!”
Dreaming of love while sleeping smiled Lady Blanch-
elys.

“’Twere well to guard her slumber,” said the knight
Dorincrest,
“Lest noisome beast or bandit break in upon her
rest.”

Not too far off he couched himself the calm hours
through,
The Assyrian stars above him in the ancient infinite
blue,

And gentle thoughts beside him that night for com-
rades boon,
While ’twixt the carven foliage faded the westering
moon.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

Still in her charmèd slumber smiled Lady Blanchelys;
And Dorincrest, still watching, yearned for the lady's
kiss.

Then the wan dawning-time began, the sacred hour
Of souls that journey noiselessly, of the unfolding
flower.

As some momentous message, in milky fluid writ,
Seeming but virgin paper, all danger to outwit,

Ending its perilous mission, is held before the sun
And the cryptic characters emerge, deciphered one
by one;—

Thus, as the dark fled backward, the trees came slowly
forth
Till the blotted forest was reborn from south to north.

The ecstatic sky grew paler, the last star flickered out,
And the wind walked tip-toe in the leaves, trembling
with doubt

And solemn, as in some hushed tender house of birth;
So, quiet with expectancy, waited God's earth

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

Till from unrecked-of mystery, the perfect sun up-
sprang
And in his tall tower suddenly a reverent wood-thrush
sang.

Now, Dorincrest, is ended your term of watchful care
And on the good king's errand forth you may blithely
fare.

Then paced he forth, but slowly, while underneath the
oak,
A sunbeam on her forehead, had Blanchelys awoke.

She girded up her kirtle; her palfrey mounted she
And toward the forest's golden margin ambled free.

The blue-eyed grass was opening; the meadow shimmered wide;
The morning mist up-floated from the sedgy river-
side.

There in the sparkling shallows a horse had paused to
drink
And a tall knight beside him on the green river-brink.

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

Veiling her look of brightness, with eyelids downward
cast,
Had Blanchelys, unknowing, love's open portals
passed.

Her gold hair in the sunlight shook like a summer
rose,
And Dorincrest,—swift passion his thronging accents
froze.

But look, the wilful palfrey stooped to the running
stream
And Blanchelys saw suddenly the knight of her fair
dream,

No dream-like shade, but glittering alive, and true.
Swiftly with kindling gesture his plumed hat he
withdrew.

And Blanchelys knew within her her soul leapt to his
look
As leaps into the sunlight a subterranean brook.

And Dorincrest enfolded the soul of Blanchelys:
Their unborn lives had waited all the long years for
this,

PART THREE: THE FAR COUNTRY

This fragile Moment, swaying as lightly as a flower,
On slender circumstance; this blossom of an hour,

Yet ages since a seedling beside primeval springs
And vastly brooded over by elemental things;

This, the great Joy unnameable, that thrills the finger-
tips;
One instant stood they silent in that apocalypse,

Till on a reed a blackbird burst into merriment
And these two laughed in answer for very heart's
content.

Then fared they forth together, feeling beneath their
feet
The lyric pulse of April, unconquerably sweet.

PART FOUR: YOU AND I

PART FOUR: YOU AND I

YOU AND I

I

THE PINE-TREE LOVERS

UNDER the purple dome of northern night
The long winds range above a waste of snow,
A sleeping ocean, never ebb and flow
Of moon-drawn tides, nor ships in shuddering flight,—
But ever falls Orion's ghostly light
On that pale ocean's archipelago
Of glooming forests that the centuries know,
Austerely silent amid leagues of white.
And there two souls of pines have interlocked
Their lives as one, far in their age-long youth;
And many a futile wraith of snow has mocked
Them with fantastic images uncouth
And many a vehement baffled wind has rocked
Them, but shakes not their steadfast heart of truth.

PART FOUR: YOU AND I

II

THE SIMPLE-HEARTED DAYS

ONCE in the simple-hearted days of yore
We mapped the world out for a morning's play;
An azure calm the Adriatic lay
Where the blue gravel road swept like a floor;
The orchard upland was Siberia hoar,
And lettuce-beds were gardens of Cathay.
You waved your hand and bravely sailed away
Across the daisied sea to Labrador.
Do you remember, too, how all that morn,
Tearfully through the tall and rustling corn,
(The yellow-haired great vikings of the north)
I called for you and you would not come forth?
How large the world was, field and wood and hill!
My heart, inalienable, calls you still.

III

CHILDHOOD

AT Princess-Dragon-and-the-Knight we played:
The Princess I, within the hayloft pent,
And an old apple tree, grotesquely bent,
Was watchful Dragon to the luckless maid.
You were the Knight, in glittering mail arrayed,

PART FOUR: YOU AND I

And then the air with victory was rent,
The Dragon slain, done my imprisonment
And far away we galloped, unafraid.
How green the meadow and the sky how blue,
How the birds gurgled in the apple-tree!
And yet that Dragon must have risen anew
For still with wicked eyes and limbs askew
He crouches by my door, imprisoning me.
Belovèd Knight-Adventurous, where are you?

IV

THE FUGUE

THE tramping chords and climbing scales I strum,
And fugues forever flying to and fro,
Bass from the treble's hurrying oboe
And treble from the bass's booming drum;
Set free at last, out where the grasses hum,
We play a living fugue, with cheeks aglow,
Pursuing and pursued, fleet-foot or slow,
And listening to the flicker's hollow thrum.
Still all along that rocky upland ledge
The columbine hangs out its scarlet horn
Where once you ran whose voice of boyish scorn
Pierced my retreat behind the cedar hedge.
But now on some dark forest's northern edge
You follow the grey night and orange morn.

PART FOUR: YOU AND I

V

AFTER LONG ABSENCE

O DEAR playfellow of youth's morning prime,
Your written words blur on the tremulous sheet,
Like leaves that shimmer in an August heat.
At last, at last, the long-awaited time
That ends your journey from that bitter clime
Wherein so long have trod your wandering feet!
And once more on the threshold when we meet
If I am dumb it will be Love's own crime.
For on such cross-roads between Dole and Joy
When such two souls stand looking face to face,
How should they greet each other, who can tell?
With glad calm eyes of comrade girl and boy,
Or rush of conscious speech and swift embrace,
Or thirsting silence unassuageable?

VI

THE CROSS OF JOY

WHEN the immitigable hours have trailed
Through the blank whiteness of the snow-fed moon
Where written shadows tremble like a rune,
And still with lagging footsteps have assailed
The Dawn's tall portals, blue and icy-mailed,

PART FOUR: YOU AND I

With wrinkled stars declining none too soon,
And last have reached the Christ-Cross of the noon,
Full sunlight, blazing, shadowless, unveiled,—
Ah, Lord of Love, gird thou my soul with power,
—For joy, an avalanche's noiseless drift,
Delayed interminably, falls too swift,—
Lest, when the stroke thrill in the dial-tower,
Pale cheek and leaping heart, I lose my dower,
With fear too great of love's too perfect gift.

VII

A CITY DWELLER

TO me, a city dweller, very far
From clover fields and river calms of glass,
But hearing always eager feet that pass,
Rattling of wheel and clattering of car,
And when night falls, instead of trancèd star,
Seeing without my pane the feverish gas,—
There came a dream of trees and amber grass
And flowering plantain by the river bar.
There our canoe lay pulsing with the stream,
Moored at the roots of our old willow tree,
And, "Where to-day?" your voice rang merrily,
And matched within your eyes the adventurous gleam.
But my own lips were locked, in this my dream,
Nor could I touch the hand you held to me.

PART FOUR: YOU AND I

VIII

AND ONE STANDS OUT

WHEN that I watch the winter twilight creep
Dark-foot adown the glimmering city road
And where the sunset's elfin country glowed,
Rose-mantled peak and valley-land, there sleep
Pale yellow seas along the westering steep,
While purple gossamer of the trees that showed
As clear as writing where the sunset bode,
Is blotted to a vague and formless heap,—
Then from sheer emptiness the thoughtful ghosts
Of other twilights gather round my chair;
And one stands out among the shadowy hosts,
With vivid look and brave, imperious air,
But like the Pine upon his sheeted coasts,
Blind to my hands and deaf unto my prayer.

IX

UPON THE FRINGES OF THE FOREST

UPON the fringes of the forest old
I stood and watched the sky leap into flower,
So thick it blossomed that autumnal hour,
Till, made by God's long silence over-bold
To win the knowledge that the Pleiads hold

PART FOUR: YOU AND I

Of birth and death and love, of sun and shower,
I harked a voice: *Thou dreamest not thy dower.*
Open thine eyes and hear the Secret told.
They were two Pine-trees interlocked as one;
They knew the Secret that the stars held fast.
They sang It to the unbelieving blast;
They whispered It before the reverent sun,
But ever, like a rhythm scarce begun,
It haunted and escaped me at the last.

X

AS IN THE ENDLESS NIGHT

AS in the endless night a wide-eyed child
Turning and tossing on his weary bed,
His brain with many a myth and fancy fed,
Were-wolf and water weird and wizard wild,
Might to his open window be beguiled
And, tiptoe peering, see the large night spread
Its unfamiliar face and thrill with dread
Keen sense of mystery on mystery piled,
So, as we waked last night, my soul looked out
From her imponderable prison-pale
And saw the vast Unknown but wrapped about,
To mortal sense, with silence like a veil.
If to clear calling we could get reply—
But, love, that vast Unknown is you and I.

THE PURE IN HEART

THE PURE IN HEART

THE PURE IN HEART (A Dramatic Interlude)

(The Men-Dogan is a Druid stone in Brittany supposed to have the power of testing character, as it sways in response to the touch of the pure hand only. The fragment is laid in Basse-Bretagne at that transitional time in the Dark Ages when the Druid religion, long tenacious of its ancient stronghold, was slowly giving way to the Christian faith.)

PART ONE

JEAN-MARIE AND GUÉNOLÉE

Before the dawn on Easter morning. Jean-Marie and Guénolée leave their cottage in the village of Kerambret.

GUÉNOLÉE

It is so quiet one can almost hear
The breath of that least down-ball of a bird
Who nests within the fig-tree by our door.
And dark, a darkness multitudinous,
Peopled with footsteps and invisible faces.
Speak, Jean-Marie, the dark has swallowed you.

THE PURE IN HEART

JEAN-MARIE

I stand close by.

GUÉNOLÉE

And yet you sound remote
As yonder shrivelled star that shuts the lips
And shrinks to nothingness before my gaze.

JEAN-MARIE

Enough of shrinking blinking nothingness.
Come, follow me.

GUÉNOLÉE

Why need we venture forth
Before the red sun smites the ivied towers
Of Château Kerambret, while cattle still
Sleep in their sheds of straw and birds are mute?

JEAN-MARIE

The birds are mute.

GUÉNOLÉE

It seems not Easter morn.
Last year the sky rippled with rosy colour
Before the dawn and nightingales sang low.
To-day the tall blind Reaper might have passed
And silenced all the sleepers as they slept,
The white rime of his nostrils on the night,
The dark wind of his garments following him.

THE PURE IN HEART

JEAN-MARIE

The wind blows from the marshes of Tregunc'k.

GUÉNOLÉE

The fog sticks in my throat, and Jean-Marie,
Your hair is frosted with the glimmering dew.

JEAN-MARIE

What matters drench of dew and drip of dark
And reek of fog from here to Pouldohan?
We go.

GUÉNOLÉE

Look yonder to the vast sea fog,
Stained with suffusion from the setting moon,
That hangs like some pomegranate over-ripe,
Swollen and yellow above the ominous sea.

JEAN-MARIE

Moon sets and sun will rise.

GUÉNOLÉE

The Easter sun,
Dear sun that shone upon the head of Christ!

JEAN-MARIE

Ay, but before. Think of those centuries,
Menhir, cromlech and dolmen, long ago,
Before these Christian monks with cross and cowl
Trailed their black length across Armorica

THE PURE IN HEART

And stole the solemn Druid ceremony,
Building high roofs to hold their mummary,
Patching bright glass to stain the innocence
Of nature's face for lovers of the light.

GUÉNOLÉE

It is some evil angel speaks, not you,
For you and I do celebrate this day
By pilgrimage to Saint Barbara's hill-hung shrine.

JEAN-MARIE

Saint Barbara's hill-hung shrine and far beyond.

GUÉNOLÉE

Beyond?

JEAN-MARIE

Unto an elder stone and temple.

GUÉNOLÉE

The fog lifts and we see the curves of road,
A quiet ribbon beneath our feet unrolled
As by some mighty and invisible hand.
Is that the hollow lane scooped out between
Its brier hedges and tall poplar stems
Where herds of cows file leisurely by day?
Dear Jean-Marie, I cannot find your hand.
I lose you in the shadows of the trees.

JEAN-MARIE

Let be my hand. And silence, Guénolée,
You should have thoughts to keep you company.

THE PURE IN HEART

GUÉNOLÉE

Fair shining thoughts should walk beside us two,
Memorial thoughts of Mary and her joy.

JEAN-MARIE

Now, by the Men-Dogan, prate you no more
Of Mary and her joy and Easter Morn.

GUÉNOLÉE

My Jean-Marie, baptised in her name,
Swear not an oath upon the Men-Dogan,
The Druid stone accursed.

JEAN-MARIE

The Men-Dogan
Ages ago was set for chastity,
A monument and a sign of purity,
For whoso lays a touch upon the stone,
And the stone trembles like a reed wind-shaken,
That one is stainless from the smirch of sin.

GUÉNOLÉE

A ruined tale of folk who inhabit death.

JEAN-MARIE

And have got wisdom, as thou and I some day.

GUÉNOLÉE

How strange an air blows from your broken words!

THE PURE IN HEART

JEAN-MARIE

Not stranger than the wind of prophecy
That whistles round the dolmen of Tregunc'k,
Irreparably freighted with foredoom.

GUÉNOLÉE

The heavy scent of Carnoët's fallen pines,
Freighting with forest incense these dim aisles.

(They enter the forest of Carnoët.)

How dusk within like some cathedral close
When gates are locked and choristers are gone.

JEAN-MARIE

There is a close locked more relentlessly
And duskier than the wood of Carnoët.

GUÉNOLÉE

Here first we saw each other, you recall?
On horseback you, beside the leafy door
Of that wood-cutter's hut; I with my bird
In its green cage. A skylark, was it not?
From the Pardon des Oiseaux I had come:
It was in April and the oaks in bud.
But whither now?

JEAN-MARIE

It is your humour thus to flit the time,
Unmindful of the Memory beside you,

THE PURE IN HEART

Like one who dances by an open grave.
Whither, you ask? We follow this forefinger
Stretched down the solemn aisles of Carnoët.
Then to Quimperlé's climbing roofs and towers,
Plumed orchard slopes and black shine of the stream.
Beyond, we reach the sea-downs and the sea.
There in the yellow sand the thistle plants,
Star-shaped, pale prickly-blue, and violet-veined,
Will stud the dunes as on that summer's day
When you and I first walked to Plouharnec.

GUÉNOLÉE

Is that our goal, the beach of Plouharnec?

JEAN-MARIE

White arrows of the noon will play across
The broad deserted sea as we shall follow
The long beach curves where crisping waves run up
And break in frills like fairy christening clothes—

GUÉNOLÉE

At last Saint Barbara's cross against the sun!

(They approach the pilgrimage hill.)

JEAN-MARIE

The tufts of weed washed high upon the shore
Are caught beneath the shifting drifting sands.
The sands are rounded like still human shapes
And the bleached seaweed flows like dead girls' hair
From buried heads, face downward in the sand!

THE PURE IN HEART

GUÉNOLÉE

What? Can you see so far as Plouharnec,
The seabeach and the seaweed and the sea?

JEAN-MARIE

A dead girl, flung face downward, lying there.

*(Guénolée stops at the foot of Saint Barbara's
hill.)*

No staying and no praying, no atonement.

GUÉNOLÉE

Let us ascend and thank God for the light.

JEAN-MARIE

Darkness is on us yet.

GUÉNOLÉE

A Druid spell

Darkens your eyes to have forsook the Christ!

JEAN-MARIE

Not all the water from a hundred shrines
Avails to wash your forehead free from stain.
How you have teased me, played and dallied with
me,
Blindfolded me and led me through the dark.
Now will I lead you by a ruthless road,
Unto a goal implacable and just.

THE PURE IN HEART

Whither your way was sped you deigned not tell,
But as the bazvalan and breutaer
Toss back and forth light sallies at the feast,
So ever when I looked into your eyes
You veiled them with a shower of sparkling rays,
Blue as the deepest noonday on the sea.
And oftentimes you sighed within your sleep,
Nor had you pity for my voiceless question.

GUÉNOLÉE

I did not dream my husband questioned me.

JEAN-MARIE

Tell me that when you went to Penanheff
You did not meet your lover at the fair
And nod in secret at the ribbon booth,
Madame Saint Anne your smiling patroness?

GUÉNOLÉE

No, Jean-Marie, I did not meet my lover.

JEAN-MARIE

You did not meet with Tamic at the booth,
When the procession fluttered banners white
And gold Saint Anne was borne into the sun?
Nor did you join him at the still lavoir,
Nor did he walk with you those cursèd miles
At twilight on the road from Penanheff?

THE PURE IN HEART

GUÉNOLÉE

We met and walked together, Tamic and I.

JEAN-MARIE

Yes, Corentine so swore to me with tears.

GUÉNOLÉE

Not Corentine?

JEAN-MARIE

She, the forsaken sweet,
My sister, saw you at the lone lavoir,
With Tamic, who had vowed his life to her,—

GUÉNOLÉE

And eats his heart in silence to the end.

JEAN-MARIE

He that has wrung slow tears from Corentine,
Stabbed me, his friend, murdered your innocence!

GUÉNOLÉE

Unravel for me the tangles of your mind
Nor let us tarnish Christ's clear risen glory
With idle accusation of crime unknown.

JEAN-MARIE

You know the crime as you shall know the end
Whereto our pilgrimage is unfaltering set,
To set your faltering hand unto the stone.

THE PURE IN HEART

Look yonder at the landmarks of our race,
The brook Pouldohan, deep within its gulch,
The ancient yew-tree, and the ruined mill;
The desolate Druid stones of wild Tregunc'k
And the waste lonely marches where you hear
La Torche boom dreadfully far out at sea!
Uttermost stone and greatest of the line,
The Men-Dogan towers to the day of wrath.
There creeps a rim of pallor round your mouth,
The sweat of fear that tightens round the heart.

GUÉNOLÉE

Fear, not of you.

JEAN-MARIE

What then?

GUÉNOLÉE

A fear for you,
Who wore me once the jewel on your breast,
Who held me as a saint within a shrine——

JEAN-MARIE

Yes, so I held you, heavenly-pure and sweet,
Until——

GUÉNOLÉE

A rumour like a spotted snake
That creeps and creeps and leaves a slimy trail——

THE PURE IN HEART

JEAN-MARIE

What was the secret Tamic whispered to you
With Madame Saint Anne smiling from her niche?

GUÉNOLÉE

I swear to you Tamic is not my lover,
And yet perhaps some words of love were spoken.
But not for me—

JEAN-MARIE

For whom?

GUÉNOLÉE

I cannot tell.

JEAN-MARIE

Words, Guénolée, I should have joyed to hear?

GUÉNOLÉE

No, Jean-Marie.

JEAN-MARIE

How white and stern she is!

(They walk in silence.)

Now the great Druid dolmen lifts its head,
And wild La Torche calls her doomed children home.
Guénolée, but repent!

GUÉNOLÉE

Nay, I am glad.

THE PURE IN HEART

JEAN-MARIE

Glad shall you be to touch the Men-Dogan
That moves not for the frail nor the untrue,
But only the pure hand avails?

GUÉNOLÉE

A lie!

JEAN-MARIE

The stone of chastity a lie?

GUÉNOLÉE

A lie,

A Druid mummary, an old wives' tale.

JEAN-MARIE

Yet if the Men-Dogan move not for you
Perchance the sequel also shall become
An old wives' tale, to be recited low.

GUÉNOLÉE

I fear you not, for God will interpose,
If God's will be to save me, Jean-Marie.
If not, why, what is life, that I should grieve?
If calumny has bewildered you to charge
Such sin on me, how should a trembling stone,
Even if it tremble at my finger's touch,
Change your mistrust to happiness again?

JEAN-MARIE

Pause, Guénolée.

THE PURE IN HEART

GUÉNOLÉE

What would you now, I ask?

JEAN-MARIE

O Guénolée, once worshipped Guénolée.
How fair you are and once how innocent!
How fair and calm, yet irretrievably lost!

GUÉNOLÉE

Centuries have lain upon me even to-day
From Kerambret to this stone Men-Dogan.
Look deep into my eyes. Do you not see
A wise and ancient soul, baptised in grief?
Look, Jean-Marie!

JEAN-MARIE

I do not dare to look.
Your eyes are like an angel's. I have heard
Such eyes they were that tempted Saint Jerome.
A woman's eyes are like a Venice cup,
Like swords that kill, like baleful stars that burn,
Like all things lovely, terrible.

GUÉNOLÉE

Nay, look!

JEAN-MARIE

When I have drawn my knife above your throat
Then will I take a long look and the last

THE PURE IN HEART

Upon your little flower-like upturned face;
'Twill lie, O Guénolée, upon my knee,
Your dark hair falling backward on the grass
And my hand underneath, just as of old.
Then my last kiss will hang above your lips
Like the imperial bee's above his cup.
He hangs in air, he quivers for the plunge.
So I that last keen poisoned draught of you,
For memory of past hours, my Guénolée.

GUÉNOLÉE

Hush!

JEAN-MARIE

Then the knife!

GUÉNOLÉE

Hush, we are not alone.

JEAN-MARIE

While in your eyes——

GUÉNOLÉE

On the stone's farther side!

*(Voices are heard from the other side of
the great dolmen.)*

JEAN-MARIE

A man and woman! By the Men-Dogan!

THE PURE IN HEART

GUÉNOLÉE

Tamic!

JEAN-MARIE

And Corentine!

GUÉNOLÉE

How close they stand!
Stoop here among the heath! Stir not!

PART TWO

TAMIC AND CORENTINE

CORENTINE

Tamic!

TAMIC

No, it was not revenge, that could not be.
A broken life may not be mended so.
Revenge will not knit up the ravelled life.

CORENTINE

Why have you followed me? I heard La Torche
Call, call me, and I fain obeyed,—La Torche,
Sucking the sea-waifs downward endlessly,
Tempestuous soother of wrecked ships and souls.

TAMIC

Poor child!

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THE PURE IN HEART

CORENTINE

I ran, I ran.

TAMIC

You heard my voice?

CORENTINE

Here I sank down, outdone for weariness.

TAMIC

In the pitiless shadow of the Druid stone!

CORENTINE

The Stone of Chastity, moveless for me!

TAMIC

Moveless for you.

CORENTINE

It was my own lips that pronounced my sentence.
Had you been merciful!

TAMIC

My soul was killed.
If I had loved you less! I loved too much.
As if one told me that the Christ in heaven
Had sold himself, so when you told me how
The thing I held most sacred in the world
Had thus been flung to earth, a light o' love,
How on another's breast your head had lain,
Your lips had touched another's——

THE PURE IN HEART

CORENTINE

Ah, no more!

TAMIC

It seemed the very stones were eyes of flame,
The leaves were passionate tattlers of the thing.

CORENTINE

I was so young and I was left alone.
He swept me like a billow off my feet.
I knew not what love meant until you came.

TAMIC

O but those bitter moments closed upon me
Like armèd men, and blinded, desperate,
I fought them back, recoiling in the dark.
Then I burst out upon you in my madness.

CORENTINE

I knelt before you, raimented in tears,—
Tamic, Tamic! But you would not forgive,
Though my lost feet went bleeding unto hell,
Lost, bleeding, for the hand that you refused.

TAMIC

I am consumed with grief remediless
In ruth for you.

CORENTINE

And that poor kiss of mine
Went outcast, beggared.

THE PURE IN HEART

TAMIC

Corentine, poor child,
Your lips on mine had blotted out the world.
I counted it a virtue to withhold
But yet to bear the brunt of my withholding,
Letting it go abroad as faithlessness.
Thus all the country-side from Kerambret
To Pouldohan pelted Tamic with scorn
And ringed an aureole for Corentine.

CORENTINE

All this is true, Tamic.

TAMIC

I bore the blame,
And even Jean-Marie, my boyhood's friend,
Too careless guardian of your tender youth,
Deemed you unsullied as the new-born rose,

CORENTINE

(*Bitterly.*) I that had sown my petals in the mire!
All this is true, Tamic. I a black thing,
Yet ringed about with sickly saintliness,
And you a shining one, robed pitifully,
A target for the mud of wayfarers.
Under which semblance did you walk and talk
And spend the hours with her, my brother's wife,

THE PURE IN HEART

The lovely Guénolée, compassionate
For your spiteful usage, or perchance,
She was allured by tang of hinted deeps,
As gentle women are, I know, I know.

TAMIC

In God's name, do not speak of Guénolée!

CORENTINE

Every old hedger and crone in Kerambret
Will gossip soon of you and Guénolée.

TAMIC

You are mad, you are mad.

CORENTINE

Sooth, what has maddened me
But stinging thoughts of you and Guénolée?

TAMIC

And she as high as Mary crowned in heaven.

CORENTINE

What, Guénolée? The twilight lane, the tryst—

TAMIC

Ah, Corentine, once and not long ago,
You were too young for that dark under-look.
The innocence of those who have not learned
Gives clearer vision far.

THE PURE IN HEART

CORENTINE

I have been taught.

TAMIC

You have not learned the soul of Guénolée,
A soul that knows and yet is pure of guile.

CORENTINE

What does she know?

TAMIC

She knows the pain and passion
That brought the darkness to your underlids.
She knows you, shields you, loves you and believes.

CORENTINE

What, Guénolée? And he?

TAMIC

Is in the dark.

(On the other side of the Men-Dogan.)

JEAN-MARIE

In dark till now. Ah, Guénolée, my wife!

TAMIC

She passionately defended you and pleaded——

CORENTINE

For me?

THE PURE IN HEART

TAMIC

For you.

CORENTINE

What, Guénolée?

TAMIC

Even so.

She said that God makes pure through suffering,
That He would comfort you as some lost lamb
Safe in the shepherd's bosom. Could I do less?
Could man be more implacable than heaven?
She showed me all the sin and all the blame,
The hateful love that was idolatry,
The love I bore you.

CORENTINE

Nay, Tamic, my lover,
But love me once again as once you loved.

TAMIC

Never again the old idolatrous way.

CORENTINE

I dreamed one moment—that you had forgiven.

TAMIC

Mine is the crying need to be forgiven,
I, the unmerciful judge condemning you.
I should have been a shield and buckler to you.

THE PURE IN HEART

CORENTINE

I am asleep and dream a miracle!
Look, I will lay a finger on the Stone
And if it tremble to my touch, Tamic,
Then I shall know the miracle is true,
The priceless gift of love and absolution.
It were a miracle that the Stone should move
To my frail finger. Virgin, give me strength!
The Men-Dogan shall answer. Nay, I fear!
The mother of doomed souls is calling for me.
Lo, if this sign shall fail, La Torche, La Torche!

*(At the touch of Corentine's finger, the
Men-Dogan sways on its base.)*

GUÉNOLÉE

*(Whispering.) For God, who judges of the pure
in heart.
Hath made the Druid stone his oracle,
And radiant parable of purity.
Even as the Angel lifted up the stone,
Hath the great burden gone from Corentine.*

CORENTINE

The whole earth swims to trembling and to bright-
ness;
The Lord is risen this day. Kiss me, Tamic!

THE PURE IN HEART

JEAN-MARIE

My blessed Guénolée!

GUÉNOLÉE

*Bless thou our Lord
Who has dwelled to-day within the Druid stone.*

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